

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Nurses Association represents nurses and healthcare professionals throughout Oregon. For more than 120 years, we have used our collective power to raise the standards for nurses and healthcare professionals throughout Oregon.

The Oregon Nurses Association is proud to support SB 703, the Pathways to Protection and Citizenship Act. SB 703 allocates money to the Department of Human Services to award grants to nonprofit legal service providers that cover the cost of clients' legal services. This is a bill that will save and strengthen families, improve outcomes in ODHS programs, bolster our workforce, and strengthen the general fund by helping immigrants transition from state services like Healthier Oregon to OHP.

Immigrants are a critical part of Oregon's healthcare system, for example, 17.5% of our Health Aides are foreign-born, according to the American Immigration Council. Immigrants work at all levels of our industry, protecting these essential workers from deportation ensures quality care for thousands of patients.

Up to 1/3 of Oregonians without an immigration status are actually eligible under federal law for legal status, that is over 25,000 people. Many of these Oregonians live in fear of family separation and deportation because they can't afford the high costs of legal services. SB 703 stabilizes our workforce, strengthens the general fund, and protects our healthcare system from the threat of mass deportation. This bill is good for all Oregonians.

The Oregon Nurses Association urges you to support SB 703.

Sincerely,

Paige Spence

Oregon Nurses Association