

Chair Prozanski , Vice-chair Thatcher and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Adriana Miranda, I am the Executive Director for Causa. Causa is an immigrant rights organization that works to improve the lives of Latinx immigrants and their families in Oregon through advocacy, coalition building, leadership development, and civic engagement. Latinx immigrants and their families are the heart of Causa and inspire, implement, and champion our work. Immigrant Oregonians enrich our communities and state. We are your neighbors, friends, family members, local business owners, students, and most importantly we are Oregonians. I am here in support of SB1568 Vulnerable Youth GUardianship.

Our priority here is to ensure that vulnerable youth in Oregon are protected and that Oregon aligns with federal law. By expanding court jurisdiction, you are helping 18-21-year-olds who have experienced abuse, neglect or abandonment find a guardian and limiting their trauma.

This bill has many advantages including that it would allow the court to provide a guardian for these vulnerable youth. A guardian promotes the long-term well-being and stability of vulnerable youth as they adjust to a new cultural context, language, and educational system, and recover from the trauma of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Coming to a new country is not easy, and much less so when children have gone through traumatic events.

This bill gives vulnerable youth a chance to succeed. Vulnerable youth who have been subject to trauma are particularly susceptible to becoming victims of human trafficking. By allowing courts to appoint a guardian to youth over 18, the legislature will provide protection for those who may otherwise be targets for traffickers.

Like many of our families, vulnerable youth join the long American tradition of coming here in search of a better life and the freedom and opportunity we offer. Let's not deny them that.