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House Committee On Judiciary
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: HB 3265

Chair Bynum and Committee Members:

I am writing in support of HB 3265. The existing framework of federal immigration laws not only adversely affects many immigrants, it also adversely affects those businesses that depend on immigrant employees, communities with immigrant members, and people who depend on immigrants in other ways. In particular, the federal government has failed to create and implement an immigration policy that recognizes the benefits that immigrants have contributed to Oregon. Because current immigration law often works to the detriment of Oregon, it is wrong to devote our taxpayer dollars to address a problem created by the federal government.

The fact that many Oregon businesses rely on immigrant employees in both rural and urban areas is beyond dispute. Past legislative matters involving basic protections for immigrants have been supported by organizations such as the Oregon Business Association, Oregon Farm Bureau Federation, Oregon Winegrowers Association, Oregon Association of Nurseries, Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association, Oregon Dairy Farmers Association, Oregon Landscape Contractors Association, Oregon AFL-CIO, and a multitude of individual businesses. If the federal government cannot come up with an immigration system that meets the needs of Oregon businesses, then Oregon should refrain from abetting federal policies that impede the ability to operate a successful business in Oregon.

Although it is obvious that immigration arrests at and near courthouses put a chilling effect on immigrants seeking access to the courts, the chilling effect also adversely affects other people who seek justice. If witnesses to a crime, tort, or violation of another legal right are unwilling to attend judicial proceedings, it is the victims who suffer, irrespective of their citizenship or immigration status. Enacting HB 3265 would help protect the integrity of the state judicial system and foster the administration of justice to the benefit of all persons who deserve it.

HB 3265 will likewise benefit the welfare of communities throughout Oregon, especially those with sizable immigrant populations. Cooperation with heavy-handed federal agencies can result in sizable segments of a community being removed or dislocated, which can threaten the fabric of such communities. Communities that lose population face the prospect of vacant and abandoned houses that attract dysfunctional behaviors and burden municipalities with shrinking

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tax bases. Similarly, local economies cannot shrink without damaging the job prospects for those left behind.

Finally, some of the controversial means that federal agencies have used to enforce immigration laws are inconsistent with the moral values of most Oregonians. The State has not always acted perfectly in the past with respect to socially-disadvantaged persons, but showing compassion to those who contribute beneficially to Oregon's economy and communities would certainly be a step in the right direction. Should the U.S. Congress come up with laws that fairly and reasonably administer the process of immigration in a way that does not work to the detriment of Oregon, perhaps then it would be appropriate to consider devoting some portion of the State's limited resources to immigration matters. Until then, it would be imprudent for the State to act to the detriment of its economy, communities, and citizens. Therefore, I urge you to pass HB 3265.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Very truly yours,

s/Bert P. Krages
Bert P. Krages II