

Dear Chair Bynum and members of the committee,

I am writing in support of HB 3265. As a mother, a librarian, and a person of faith, I strongly support the strengthening of Oregon's sanctuary law. Through my work I have had the opportunity to hear some of the stories of our neighbors who live in our community without documentation. On the one hand, I've been astonished with how hard working these individuals are. There is no denying that all of us benefit from the lowly-paid labor of these individuals in agriculture, construction, hospitality and other industries. On the other hand, I've been saddened to learn how these families live in fear and are subject to harassment. Certainly Oregon can do better job of being true to our values and treating all members of our community with humanity.

As is often the case, by helping others we help ourselves. We all lose when some members of our community live in fear. Without the assurance of sanctuary, these individuals may not provide witness testimony against criminals, seek medical help or vaccines in a pandemic, or ensure that their children (who may be U.S. citizens) receive the education they need.

HB 3265 is an opportunity to provide safeguards that will benefit all Oregonians. We live in troubled times, and immigrants have always been an easy scapegoat for politicians and provocateurs seeking someone to blame. I urge you to resist their fear-mongering and support legislation that will make our communities more productive and compassionate for us all.

Thank you,

Roberta Richards, MLIS, PhD

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