

Mary Ann Barham
First Unitarian Church
.... NE 38th Ave.
Portland, OR 97212

March 23, 2021

Dear Rep. Bynum and members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing today to urge that you pass HB 3265, the Sanctuary Promise Act. I believe strongly that Oregon's 30 year old sanctuary law needs to be strengthened so that all Oregonians and their families feel safer and more protected. I am member of the Immigrant Justice Action Group at First Unitarian Church in Portland and involved with the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice. My values are deeply rooted in the belief everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. I also have firsthand experience working with immigrant communities in the Portland metro area and have family members who are a part of immigrant communities across the country.

I care about this bill because I know firsthand how fearful many members of my community feel on a daily basis. One family's story frequently comes to mind. Suzanna (not her real name) is a woman in her mid-30s has lived in Oregon since childhood where she crossed the Mexico-US border with an aunt. A few years ago her ex-husband was harassing her and her teenage daughter. Though she was concerned about her and her daughter's safety she was unwilling to go to the county courthouse to get the paperwork to file a temporary restraining order because she was afraid of encountering an ICE agent. During this same period Suzanna also told me of times when she and her three children hide behind furniture in their apartment after they saw a local police car drive by and times when they have been harassed in the grocery for speaking Spanish.

No one in my community should live with this type of fear. Suzanna and her spouse are integral and valued part of my community. They deserve to feel safe and protected.
Please pass this bill. It is crucial that the state do everything possible to care for and protect all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Barham