

Kenneth Crouse
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March 24, 2021

Dear Chair Bynum and members of the committee,

I write to you today to urge you to pass HB 3265, The Sanctuary Promise Act. This piece of legislation will get us closer to a horizon in which all Oregonians feel their families are safe, secure and protected. As a person whose congregation is an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation of the United Church of Christ, this bill protects the rights we believe all immigrants deserve. This piece of legislation does that by expanding our decades-old Sanctuary law so that more people in my community feel safe from unfair harassment and profiling going to work, going to get groceries, or driving to their places of worship.

I care about this bill because I have heard of the effects on a community when its immigrants fear the presence of ICE. I was present in Springfield when the city council held hearings on discontinuing a contract with ICE to hold detainees in their jail. Members in the community spoke of being afraid to venture out of their homes to conduct business in public spaces for fear that ICE may be watching. Business leaders testified of the negative impact on Latinx businesses because patrons didn't feel safe frequenting their places of business, and new businesses were hesitant to move into the city with such an atmosphere of fear. Law enforcement officers testified that it was difficult to investigate crimes because members of the community did not want to speak with them, thinking they might be turned in to ICE. In the end the city council voted unanimously to cancel the contract with ICE after hearing all the testimony against the contract.

As a supporter in the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (IMIJ), I participated in their campaign to keep ICE out of courthouses. I could see the impact of someone getting detained by ICE when leaving a courthouse. Members of the immigrant community became afraid to go to the courthouse for routine occurrences, like paying a fine, because they feared ICE might be waiting for them. While it can often be hard to see as we navigate language in a bill, this law is really about people and communities together ensuring that all Oregonians feel safer. I urge you to pass HB 3265.

Thank you for your work and attention,

Kenneth Crouse