



March 30, 2021

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Noble and Power, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Basic Rights Oregon strongly supports HB 3230 which would ensure Oregon's immigrants have access to legal representation during deportation proceedings. As the state's leading LGBTQ advocacy organization, we center equality for our LGBTQ community, with an emphasis on racial justice.

Even with a new president and federal administration, Oregon's immigrants are still very vulnerable to deportation which is why we need accessible, culturally responsive, and community-focused legal services.

Many people in removal proceedings have valid legal claims to remain in the country and continue to contribute to Oregon's communities, but have no way to articulate these claims without the assistance of counsel. Universal representation safeguards due process by allowing immigrant Oregonians to access the rights afforded to them under existing law.

The impact of having an attorney is clear: representation by an attorney improves someone's chances of remaining home with their family by 457 percent.

Universal Legal Representation expands the successful Equity Corps pilot program funded by Multnomah County, the City of Portland, and the State of Oregon to create statewide infrastructure for immigration legal defense. The program will also prepare Oregon for any major changes in national immigration policy by creating community-led pathways to citizenship.

By creating a statewide call center, it would provide direct contacts and streamline access for those seeking help. Community-based organizations that already have deep connections to the community would oversee the program's policy and fiscal decisions and have an active role in coordinating the program. The statewide representation team would also embed lawyers, through fellowships, at CBOs to ensure community members could turn to the organizations they already know and trust in times of need.

In order to ensure equal, fair representation for our immigrant neighbors, we need community-led changes. Universal Representation will help.

We must protect the rights of everyone who calls Oregon home and support their ability to thrive. By doing so, we can continue being a place that values families and communities. We urge your YES vote on HB 3230.

Thank you.