



Co-Chair Golden, Co-Chair Smith, and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Leland Baxter-Neal and I am the director of advocacy at Latino Network, a member organization of Oregon Worker Relief (OWR). OWR is a registered nonprofit in this state composed of the lead community organizations behind the successful Oregon Worker Relief Fund.

We're here to express our gratitude and support for the Governor's inclusion of a critical investment in HB 5002 to provide universal legal representation for Oregonians in immigration hearings.

A great deal of work has gone into creating a structure to carry out this vision. HB 3230, currently in House Judiciary, is the bill that lays out how the system will work.

The concept of Universal Representation is one that recognizes Oregonians as Oregonians, regardless of where they are born. Immigrants in this state make our communities, our schools, and our places of business stronger. But education, family and work can be easily interrupted for immigrant Oregonians.

When a person is faced with deportation, unlike with criminal court, they are not guaranteed legal representation. Under our immigration system, many immigrants, including legal permanent residents and others with lawful status, routinely face immigration proceedings that can result in deportation and a lifetime banishment from the United States. The government is always represented by trained immigration attorneys arguing for deportation. Immigrants, however, may face these proceedings with nothing more than a telephone interpreter.

The fear of facing deportation proceedings without support can prevent one from seeking services, medical care or shelter during a wildfire. It disrupts productivity, family cohesion, and community safety.

In the system being proposed by HB 3230, no income-qualified Oregonian will be left without legal counsel. During our policy development phase, four principles guided our work to accomplish this goal:

- **Universality:** Everyone means everyone. Legal services should not be denied to an immigrant Oregonian simply because they cannot afford them;



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- **Prioritization:** Those at imminent risk of deportation and Oregonians who are detained should receive services first;
- **Accountable:** The system is accountable to both the impacted community and the legislature through rigorous reporting;
- **Integrated:** There is collaboration between all parts of the system.

There is a technical change to HB 5002 that we respectfully request be made (Section 1 Line 6).

The bill currently refers to the “Oregon Worker Relief Coalition.” The correct name of the nonprofit organization is “Oregon Worker Relief.” We also want to note for the committee that the request from DAS to OWR has changed from \$10 million to \$10.5 million in HB 3230.

This proposal has earned the support of the Racial Justice Council, is included in the Governor’s Recommended Budget, is listed among the BIPOC caucus’s top priorities, is on the Fair Shot for All Coalition Agenda, and is supported by over 30 community-based organizations. We ask you to please support this appropriation.

Sincerely,

Leland Baxter-Neal - Director of Advocacy, Latino Network