

SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3230

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

My name is Ines Pena and I live in Newberg.

I am writing in support of HB 3230, Universal Legal Representation, which would provide immigrant Oregonians legal support during a difficult and traumatic process. Despite a new president and administration, Oregon's immigrants are still very vulnerable to deportation which is why we need accessible, culturally responsive, and community focused legal services.

Universal Legal Representation expands the 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, such as deportations, and prepare for any major changes in immigration policy. Here are some key facts on Universal Legal Representation:

?The program would create a statewide call center that would provide direct contacts and streamline access for those seeking help.

?Impacted communities would be able to choose their provider.

?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 statewide representation team would embed lawyers, through fellowships, at CBOs to ensure community members could turn to the organizations they already know and trust in times of need.

Oregon is home to thousands of immigrants and refugees who live in both cities and towns statewide and are critical to the state's cultural and economic vitality. Immigrant Oregonians work in key Oregon industries, are essential workers, and own small businesses that contribute to the vibrancy of our communities.

According to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, one in every 10 Oregon children live with a family member without legal status. My family is one of them. We are a mixed status family and find ourselves living in fear that deportation may come and separate our family. A family that has contributed to the community for over 20 years.

We've already seen this same kind of community focused system in action. By taking the lessons learned from the Oregon Worker Relief Fund model, we can build a similar system that allows our communities of color to connect with the organizations they already know and trust to help them during this difficult time.

All Oregonians should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of where they were born. But Oregonians who are immigrants and refugees, especially immigrant Oregonians who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color, have faced increased immigration enforcement that includes racial profiling, detention, family separation, and potential removal to countries where they have fled violence and persecution.

On behalf Capaces Leadership Institute, my family, and myself, I urge you to vote Yes on HB 3230. 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.

Thank you.