

SUBJECT: Yes, Universal Legal Representation SB 1543

Chair Prosanski, Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judicial Committee,

My name is Cristina and I live in Washington County. I am writing in support of Universal Legal Representation, which would provide immigrant Oregonians with legal support during deportation proceedings. We know that the right legal representation can make a big difference in a person's case! A community member without legal representation is 5.5 times more likely to be deported regardless of the merit of their case.

As a community advocate, I have supported immigrant families navigate immigration related resources. However, often I hear community members share how people I know were deported because they did not know where to find lawyers that would take their case or didn't count on financial resources to pay for legal counsel. If this bill passes it would allow community members to access a statewide call center easily and quickly where they can be informed about the program, options and if they qualify to choose their legal provider at their preferred community best organization.

I also had the pleasure of working with community members who are recent immigrants and who have received legal representation through the Equity Corps of Oregon pilot program. Based on their experience the service they have received has been important because many of them have been able to advance their cases with legal providers guiding them in the process in their preferred language. This support have allowed community members to also focus on other important things such as taking care of their family and their health. Now if Universal Legal Representation gets passed it would create a statewide infrastructure for immigration legal defense.

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.

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,

Cristina Delgado