



Taking action for basic human needs.



To: House Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
From: Human Services Coalition of Oregon
Date: February 9, 2022
Re: Support for SB 1543 – Universal Legal Representation

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

For over three decades, HSCO has convened like-minded advocates in an effort to fight for the policy development and resources necessary to support Oregonians experiencing hardship. HSCO is made up of over 100 individuals and organizations that work together to develop effective tax, education, health care, housing, human services and economic development policy that together make Oregon a better place for all.

HSCO supports SB 1543 to create a Universal Representation program. All Oregonians should be treated with fairness, 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.

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. This bill safeguards due process by allowing immigrant Oregonians to access the rights afforded to them under existing law.

Representation by an attorney is the single most outcome determinative factor in deportation proceedings. **Representation by an attorney improves someone's chances of staying with their family by 457 percent.**

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. Oregonians who are immigrants work in key Oregon industries, are essential workers, and own small businesses that contribute to the vibrancy of our communities.

HSCO urges the committee's support for SB 1543. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Co-Chairs, Human Services Coalition of Oregon