

Submitter: Nicole Forbes

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110
Implementation

Measure: SB1543

My name is Nicole Forbes and I live in Portland.

I am writing in support of SB 1543 and to ask you to pass this bill. SB 1543 would provide immigrant Oregonians with legal support during deportation proceedings. 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.

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.

SB 1543 further 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.

Oregon is home to thousands of immigrants and refugees who live in urban and rural areas 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.

I strongly believe that representation matters - especially during any immigration process. I have watched friends who have had legal support try and navigate the immigration system and even with that support, have found the process confusing and frustrating. I cannot imagine what the process would look like without legal support.

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. My community, my friends and neighbors are made up of immigrant Oregonians who are vital leaders and workers, are essential workers who care for our family members,

and own small businesses that contribute to the vibrancy of our communities.

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. For me, this is unacceptable and I urge you to pass SB 1543.

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 state that values families and communities.

Thank you,
Nicole Forbes