

Submitter: Emily Heilbrun

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110
Implementation

Measure: SB1543

SUBJECT: Yes on SB 1543

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Emily Heilbrun and I live in Eugene. I volunteer with an organization serving refugees and asylum seekers, but am writing on behalf of myself only, to support of SB 1543 which 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, including asylum seekers, have valid legal claims to remain in the country. They need legal representation in order to be able to assert their claims. 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 know that many asylum seekers have received excellent representation through Equity Corps. This important program should continue and expand. The organization I volunteer with has referred many clients to Equity Corps. For many, there are no other options.

- 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. Especially in this time, when so many employers are having trouble filling jobs, we need our immigrant community members.

- 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.
- Even Oregonians protected by DACA and TPS are still vulnerable to these inequitable processes. This has disrupted our local communities and put Oregon's children at increased risk of poverty.

In closing, I support this bill because it is needed by immigrants living in Oregon, and because it is good for the state of Oregon! 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.

Emily Heilbrun