

FAIRSHOT FOR ALL

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary & Measure 110 Implementation
From: Fair Shot for All Coalition
Re: Testimony in support of SB 1543, Universal Legal Representation

February 8, 2022

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Senators Dembrow, Gelser Blouin, Hear, Linthicum, and Manning,

The Fair Shot For All Coalition strongly supports Universal Legal Representation (SB 1543).

Everyone deserves adequate legal representation. Yet Oregonians with a lawful right to remain in the United States are routinely deported and separated from their families simply because they can't afford an attorney.

Families and communities have been living in fear of being thrown into a complex legal system without any support. While we remain hopeful that new immigration benefits will create pathways to legalization, we know that often the only difference between a family member being deported or being allowed to remain with their family in the United States is access to a lawyer.

It's time to improve Oregon's legal system by making it more just and inclusive for immigrants. The Equity Corps of Oregon, a pilot program, funded by Multnomah County, the City of Portland, and the State of Oregon, has defended immigrant Oregonians from unjust and unlawful deportations since October 2018. This pilot created a statewide infrastructure for immigration legal defense and has been hugely successful.

The Equity Corps of Oregon pilot program ensured that

- 1,349 Oregonians avoided an unlawful or unjust deportation
- 750+ Oregonian asylum seekers were empowered to request asylum
- 350+ Oregonians are on the path to full work authorization



Building off of this multi-year pilot, Universal Legal Representation would expand services through the use of massive collaborative representation, community-based lawyering and client empowerment. The program would be flexible and able to respond to anticipated legalization programs or massive raids, a sudden influx of asylum seekers, or any other changes of the immigration system.

We urge your YES vote on SB 1543.

Signed,



Fair Shot for All is an economic justice coalition of grassroots organizations and labor unions working together to build power with our communities, to create opportunities for all working families to thrive, and to dismantle historic and systemic economic inequities for Oregonians who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color (BIPOC); women; immigrants; and/or LGBTQ+. Fair Shot's work centers racial and gender equity that seeks to address inequalities through organizing and concrete policy change. For more information visit FairShotOregon.org