

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

My name is Jenny Pool Radway and I am the Executive Director of Causa; Oregon's immigrant rights organization and I am here to testify on behalf of over 30 organizations in support of Senate Bill 1543. Last legislative session, we embarked on an extensive negotiation process with immigrant rights advocates and non-profit legal service providers to ensure that we could create a program that served our communities in the best way possible. Through those negotiations, we arrived at HB 3230 in the last session. Unfortunately, the bill did not make it through the Ways and Means process, but we are excited to advocate for this bill again this session.

Everyday, Oregonian immigrant families live in fear and uncertainty, worried every day that their parents are going to be taken away or that their family will be torn apart. One in every 10 Oregonian children live with a family member without legal status, according to the Oregon Law Center. The fear of being separated from each other and the fear of not being able to access legal representation if something were to happen, creates a compounded trauma from living in constant duress of the potential of a family member getting deported. Universal Representation would help us have a fighting chance to keep our families together.

Everyone deserves access to due process, however unlike in criminal court, individuals facing deportation in civil immigration court are not guaranteed access to an attorney. We know that access to an attorney is important and we also know that without an attorney, people with a lawful right to remain in the country are routinely deported. This bill seeks to do one thing: ensure that no Oregonian facing deportation goes through that process without legal representation. In doing so, SB 1543 helps further us along in building an Oregon of strong families and just institutions.

Universal Representation is designed to ensure that people who cannot afford an immigration attorney have access to one. This bill is the further expansion of a successful multi-year pilot program called *Equity Corps of Oregon*. This pilot has protected more than 1,300 Oregonians from an unjust deportation. Should the program not be permanently established with stable funding, more than 500 survivors of sexual/physical violence may lose services; more than 750 minors may lose services; and more than 100 children could face deportation alone.

Under this model, Oregon would expand and capacitate Oregon's current non-profit legal service programs through the Oregon State Bar by creating a grant program for eligible immigration legal service providers. SB1543's model builds on the successes of the Oregon Worker Relief community-based service delivery system--in which services have been provided in most every county in the state to traditionally hard-to-reach immigrant populations.

Everyone is entitled to a fair day in court, one in which they have a chance to prove that they are legally entitled to stay here. All Oregonians have a vested interest in preventing people from being deported when they have a legal right to remain. Oregonians are 5.5 times more likely to be deported if they do not have legal representation, regardless of the merit of their case. This means that immigrant Oregonians who have a legal right to remain in the United States are routinely deported because they have no way to make their

case in front of a judge. The Universal Representation program can be a beacon of hope for those who need navigation and representation for immigration services but do not have the means to afford an attorney. I urge you to support SB 1543.

Jenny Pool Radway
Executive Director, Causa Oregon

www.causaoregon.org | 700 Marion St. NE Salem, OR 97301 | (503) 409-2473