



February 9, 2022

To: Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation

From: Oregon Education Association

Re: Support for SB 1543, Universal Legal Representation

Dear Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

The Oregon Education Association represents over 41,000 educators and education service professionals across the state, from pre-k to the community college level. Our members are teachers, bus drivers, custodians, teacher assistants, nutrition specialists, community college professionals and more.

A child's education is heavily affected by not just direct classroom experience, but by all the factors that impact their lives: housing, food, stability, familial support etc... That is why OEA supports SB 1543, and feels it is critical to ensuring all our students get access to the education and future they deserve.

Deportations are devastating on a family. Having a parent, grandparent, or other loved one or community member leave suddenly and in such a callous way can leave a child scared and traumatized. A child dealing with that level of stress cannot be expected to keep up with their schoolwork, much less succeed. At the very least, they and their loved ones deserve fair representation in court, and a chance at justice. SB 1543 would create a robust system to give Oregonians the agency in their own futures, and support families going through the trauma of deportation proceedings.

All Oregonians should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of where they were born. But Oregonians who are immigrants and refugees, especially those 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 and susceptible to suffer family separations. This has disrupted our local communities and put Oregon's children at increased risk of poverty.

SB 1543 is critical for our community. Help create an Oregon we want to see, an Oregon where those who call our state home have a fair shot and ensure that no one faces deportation proceedings alone.

OEA urges the committee to pass SB 1543 with a do pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

Michele Ruffin

Oregon Education Association