



**Advocating for Equity and Diversity  
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Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110  
Implementation

Joint Testimony in Support of SB 1560

February 9, 2022

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

As leaders from the Oregon Advocacy Commissions, we  
write jointly to urge your support of Senate Bill 1560, which  
would replace “alien” with “noncitizen” in statutory  
references of individuals who are not citizens of the United  
States.

1. The Oregon Advocacy Commissions work individually  
and in concert to ensure economic, social, political, and  
legal equity for underrepresented and often marginalized  
communities. We do this through advocacy, public policy  
research, leadership development, and partnerships.

2. Today, the Oregon Advocacy Commissions write  
jointly on this bill. Together, we feel strongly and would like to share our thoughts. In our  
statutory role of bringing equity focus and community voice into Oregon policy making, the  
Oregon Advocacy Commissions strongly support SB 1560.

**Oregon Commission on  
Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs**

Susan Soonkeum Cox, Co-Chair  
Jacqueline Leung, Co-Chair  
Legislative Members:  
Senator Michael Dembrow  
Representative Khanh Pham

**Oregon Commission  
on Black Affairs**

Mariotta Gary-Smith, Chair  
Dr. Angela Addae, Esq., Vice-Chair  
Legislative Member:  
Senator James I. Manning, Jr.

**Oregon Commission  
on Hispanic Affairs**

Jonathan Chavez Baez, Chair  
Ashley Espinoza Valdez, Vice-Chair  
Legislative Member:  
Representative Andrea Salinas

**Oregon Commission for Women**

Natasha Haunsperger, Chair  
Dr. Krista Parent, Vice-Chair  
Legislative Members:  
Senator Deb Patterson  
Representative Sheri Schouten

**Oregon Advocacy Commissions  
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Specifically on behalf of

- the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs;
- the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs;
- the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs; and
- the Oregon Commission for Women,

we enthusiastically support SB 1560.

The immigrant community has become a driving force in the State of Oregon, not only economically, but in so many other ways which makes this state thrive. This type of language is not only archaic and dehumanizing, it alienates people's sense of belonging. It is crucial to remember that those who are part of this growing community are human beings, not aliens from another universe. Language is important and it matters. It is imperative to treat people with respect and dignity, regardless of their country of origin.

Language is powerful and gives clarity to ideas. In many of our communities, language has been used as a powerful tool to reduce, erase, and harm our people. Racial slurs and intentionally hateful terms have been used to shape the narrative of our communities - all direct results of language that has been used to define us in the Americas.

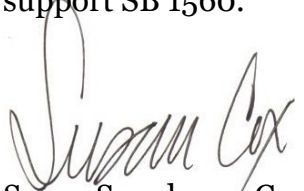
To have the word "alien" in government documents for this State continues to politically perpetuate reduced notions of personhood and humanity of immigrants as normal and acceptable and a part of our Oregon. We hope this step - while small and seemingly inconsequential - is the beginning of removing all language that is invalidating of our communities - from slavery, internment, Indigenous removal, and many others. If we are to represent ALL of us, the language needs to reflect that. This is an important place to start.

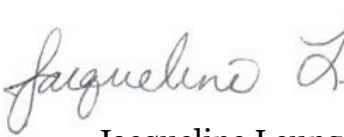


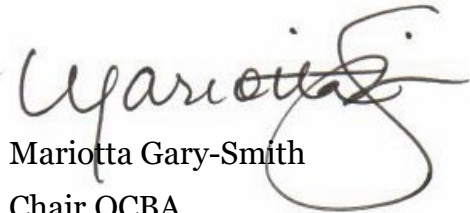
Removing such archaic and colonial language when addressing the needs and rights of migrants and refugees in Oregon leads the way in eradicating structural barriers and limitations within the existing bureaucratic apparatus. Many of us have been uprooted from our home countries due to armed conflicts, genocide, natural disasters and/or failed economies, and pursued a more prosperous and equitable life in the United States. Many of us arrive in Oregon with complex and deep layers of unaddressed and untreated trauma. Being labeled as an “alien,” only furthers our oppression, disregards us as fully human with complete human rights, and others us with malice and contempt.

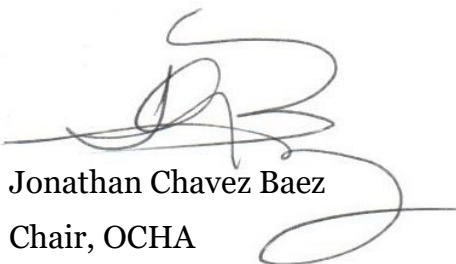
According to the American Immigration Council 2018 Report, “more than two in five immigrants in Oregon are naturalized U.S. citizens.” As our state continues to welcome immigrants and refugees, it is so timely and relevant to reform our immigration-language frameworks. When we discuss systems and structures, this is an integral part of systems and structures. The words employed connote specific meaning and color the way that others receive us and shapes our own view of ourselves. It is time to stop dividing and embrace the humanity of all who call Oregon home.

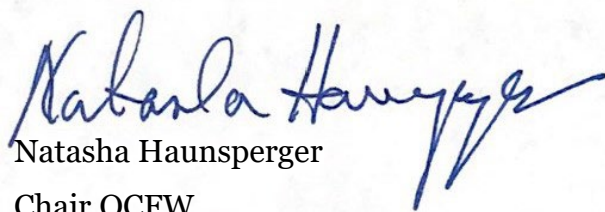
On behalf of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions and the noncitizens we represent, we firmly support SB 1560.

  
Susan Soonkeum Cox  
Co-Chair, OCAPIA

  
Jacqueline Leung  
Co-Chair OCAPIA

  
Mariotta Gary-Smith  
Chair OCBA

  
Jonathan Chavez Baez  
Chair, OCHA

  
Natasha Haunsperger  
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