



February 9, 2022

Chair Floyd Prozanski  
Vice-Chair Kim Thatcher  
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

RE: SB 1543 Universal Representation

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

My name is Cayle Tern. I want to begin by thanking all of you for the opportunity to show my support for Universal Representation. I am a naturalized American citizen who resettled in Oregon as a refugee. There are no words that can describe what an honor it is to be a citizen of the greatest country. Unfortunately, there are millions of people who have been living in America for decades who will never share the same experience. Even more disheartening, there are millions more that are fighting to remain in this country, the only country that they know. On behalf of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), I want to share how important Universal Representation is to the communities that we serve.

There are thousands of immigrants in Oregon who have received Final Orders for deportation. Thousands more are being held captive at holder centers without any idea of how, when, or if they will ever be reunited with their families. As American Citizens, we will never know how it feels to have to attend a court summons, with the possibility that it will be the last time you see your family and there is nothing you can do about it. We will never know how it feels to stand in front of people you have never met talking about what they are doing with you in legal jargon that feels like a foreign language. There are many people in removal proceedings without legal representation. Many who have legitimate reasons to remain, cannot articulate their case because they do not have the right representation. I can't imagine the hopelessness and futility that folks facing deportation feel. We know that a community member without legal representation is 5.5 times more likely to be deported regardless of the merit of their case. We know representation matters and that the right legal representation can make a big difference in a person's case.

These are just a few of the reasons why APANO urges you and your colleagues to vote "YES" to SB 1543 Universal Representation. Immigrants and refugees are people who live in our towns and cities, they are people who contribute to Oregon industries, are essential workers, and own small businesses that provide employment and contribute to the vibrancy of our communities. APANO believes Oregon has the responsibility to ensure people have access to representation. As American Citizens, we will never know or understand how it feels to be taken against your will, away from family, incarcerated in a jail cell, without means to protect yourself from the unjust application of laws that keep you there. A "YES" vote will provide safeguards to due process by providing immigrant Oregonians the access to rights under existing law.

Sincerely,

Cayle Tern, MSW  
Immigrant Program Manager