SB 627   STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

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Sub-Referral To:	Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Meeting Dates:	1/26, 2/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates $10.5 million from the General Fund to the Oregon Department of Administrative Services for deposit in the Universal Representation Fund. Appropriates $4.5 million from the General Fund to the Judicial Department for purposes of transfer to Oregon State Bar for the Legal Services Program to provide legal services on immigration matters. Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued. (Revenue lite)

FISCAL: Fiscal impact issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Program is a collaboration with the Oregon State Bar to provide services to immigrants and refugees
- Over 100 organizations make up the network of Oregon Worker Relief
- Deportation weakens the economy
- Attorneys help to ensure due process
- Provide counsel on high stakes cases which could result in permanent deportation or separation from family
- Currently drafting guidelines unique to immigration practice; will be first in the country

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Respondents appearing in Immigration Court do not have guaranteed access to counsel, because deportation is a civil, not criminal matter. Unrepresented respondents are almost five-and-a-half times more likely to lose their deportation case than those who have an attorney. Nationally, from 2007 -2012, 37 percent of all immigrants were able to secure counsel in their removal cases. In addition, persons involved in deportation proceedings often have difficulty accessing other needed resources. Senate Bill 1543 (2022) created a statewide universal representation program to provide for certain immigration services, including legal services, access to community-based navigators, and referral coordination.

Senate Bill 627 appropriates moneys from the General Fund to support the statewide universal representation program.