



February 5, 2024

Oregon House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Committee Members,

My name is Frank Garcia, and I am the Executive Director of Immigration Counseling Service (ICS). ICS urges this committee to support Oregon House Bill (HB) 4085.

For 45 years, our community-based non-profit organization has provided low-income immigrants and refugees in Oregon with legal services and connected them to wrap-around support. Our programs were born out of the pain and needs of Oregon's immigrant, migrant, refugee, and asylee communities. Our board is led by those who have experienced generational disenfranchisement and marginalization, by immigrant and refugee community members, and by Oregonians who have a direct stake in these conversations. Our staff are members of and reflective of the diverse communities we serve.

In 2020, ICS published the ***Oregon Immigration Legal Needs Report***—which was prepared by LexTerra Strategies and funded by the Oregon Immigrant and Refugee Funders Collaborative—and calls out the following realities lived by our immigrant communities:

- Cost remains the most significant barrier to accessing legal services;
- Legal status dramatically reduces the risk of exploitation and fear;
- Legal status and naturalization bring financial stability and prosperity for Oregonians from both immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds;
- Naturalized citizens enjoy better access to health care coverage, even with the expansion of free health insurance options regardless of documentation status that came into effect in July 2023;

- Immigrants, especially those without legal status or without the means to access the legal services to gain a pathway to legalization, suffer a disproportionate rate of harm from ancillary legal and social needs; and
- Immigrants already make significant contributions to Oregon's economy, and providing a pathway to legalization will dramatically increase those contributions.

In Oregon today, we are seeing immigrant families struggling to pay bills and fearful of seeking social services while living in the shadows. We see our families, neighbors, friends and coworkers living in constant fear of ICE apprehension, and the terror of being separated from their children.

However, this is not a future that has to persist. This is not the Oregon we believe in. With your support for HB 4085, we can create an Oregon where our immigrant neighbors are afforded full membership in our communities. We are eager to work together to see this crucial bill pass this session.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Garcia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Frank" and last name "Garcia" clearly distinguishable.

**Frank Garcia**  
Executive Director  
[www.ics-law.org](http://www.ics-law.org)