

February 21, 2025

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Lee Po Cha, I am the Executive Director of The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO). We are members of Oregon Coalition for Nonprofit Safety, and we are offering this testimony in support of SB 939.

SB 939 helps Oregon nonprofits that are at greater risk of violence, threats and intimidation because of who we are, who we represent or who we serve. Over the last decade there have been increasing threats and violence and intimidation directed to nonprofits like ours across the country. As an organization founded and led by immigrants and refugees, we are a visible presence and active gathering place for communities of color. Just two years ago, our main IRCO office was vandalized with neo-Nazi propaganda and the suspect arrested was found to be in possession of several guns, rifles, and white supremacist literature.

We live with the constant and daily realization that at any moment they could erupt in real violence. Our staff live with that risk, and so do the refugee and immigrant community members we serve. These events have real impact. They disrupt our ability to meet our mission. They make our community afraid to gather. They chip away at our basic and fundamental rights. It shouldn't be like this.

Addressing and assessing our security needs is an ongoing process, and because of our increased risk, it requires that we make additional investment and resources, taking away vital support for our organization's primary mission. IRCO is vulnerable to threats due to our necessary external and internal safety infrastructure that prepares for mobs or group protests in the area including hiring staff to support emergency preparedness and safety infrastructure, new security camera installation, alarm monitoring equipment, and bulletproof paneling.

As community-led nonprofits, we are often on the frontline in serving our community. We provide an incredibly important service—as a place to welcome, serve, and empower refugees, immigrants, and people across all cultures and generations to reach their full potential. What we do is important to the broader community wellbeing. We are here today in partnership with organizations with widely different missions, cultures and beliefs, because regardless of who we serve, what we believe, how we worship or represent our culture—we are committed to the principle that EVERYONE in Oregon should be entitled to exercise their rights free from violence and intimidation and deserve to do so SAFELY.

Current resources are insufficient to meet the needs of Oregon's nonprofit community. The risk is real, and we need your help addressing it. That is why we are asking you to join other states that have created a state-funded nonprofit security grant program and support SB 939.

Thank you for your attention to this legislation and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Lee Po Cha, Executive Director

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization

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