

Submitter: Victoria Francis
On Behalf Of: American Immigration Council
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB476

February 27, 2025

To: Chair Patterson and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care

From: Victoria Francis, Deputy Director, State & Local Initiatives, American Immigration Council

RE: SB 476: An act to require professional licensing boards to provide culturally responsive training to specified staff members and publish guidance on pathways to professional authorization for internationally educated individuals.

Dear Chair Patterson and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

My name is Victoria Francis, and I am the Deputy Director of State and Local Initiatives at the American Immigration Council (the Council), an organization that works to advance positive public attitudes toward immigrants and create a more welcoming America—one that provides a fair process for immigrants and adopts immigration laws and policies that take into account the needs of the U.S. economy.

I am submitting this letter to express the Council's support for removing barriers that keep qualified Oregonians from contributing to the state's workforce. To this end, I respectfully encourage the passage of SB 476, which would require professional licensing boards to provide culturally responsive training to specified staff members and publish guidance on pathways to professional authorization for internationally educated individuals.

My organization has worked with leaders in government, business, and civil society across the country to recognize the crucial role immigrants are playing in state and local economies in some of the fastest-growing and most in-demand fields, including healthcare. In order to remain competitive and meet critical healthcare workforce shortages, Oregon will need to continue to implement policies that not only attract and retain immigrant talent that complements U.S.-born workers but also build career pathways for immigrants already living in the state. SB 476 will do just that by supporting internationally educated professionals in Oregon through training and licensing guidance, thereby increasing economic opportunities for all residents and helping to meet the state's pressing workforce and healthcare needs.

To help illustrate why this measure is so important and why it makes sense to reduce barriers for all qualified Oregonians, my organization has conducted quantitative research on the impact immigrants already have on the state and the growing demand for workers in Oregon. What we found is striking:

? As of 2022, Oregon was home to 425,600 immigrants, making up 10.0 percent of the state's population. These residents are critical to addressing the state's workforce shortages across the skills and education spectrum, with 82.0 percent of immigrant Oregonians being of working age (ages 16-64), compared to 61.4 percent of their U.S.-born counterparts.

? Immigrants in Oregon contribute millions in taxes and consumer spending. In 2022, immigrant households in the state earned \$19.7 billion in income, with \$3.6 billion going to federal taxes and \$1.7 billion to state and local taxes, leaving them with \$14.4 billion in spending power that was reinvested back in the state.

? Oregon's immigrant population is already filling a critical need for workers. In 2022, despite making up 10.0 percent of the state's total population, immigrants made up 13.0 percent of workers in the labor force, 17.5 percent of STEM workers, and 14.4 percent of health aides.

As more Oregonians reach retirement age and the state must address workforce shortages, retaining and leveraging the talent of all residents is critical. Oregon is in a position to take decisive action to support and leverage the skills of the state's future workforce and advance opportunities that benefit all Oregonians. I encourage the Senate Committee on Health Care to support the passage of SB 476.

Thank you for your consideration,

Victoria Francis

Deputy Director, State & Local Initiatives
American Immigration Council