

Submitter: D Torres
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB703

Chair & Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal directing DHS to provide grants to service providers for assisting noncitizens in changing their immigration status. Allocating state funds to assist noncitizens in altering their immigration status diverts resources from critical areas that directly impact Oregon U.S. citizens.

Potential for Misuse of Funds

There is a risk that funds intended for immigration services could be misused. Recent incidents have raised concerns about the management of grants related to migrant assistance. For example, the Trump administration temporarily withheld millions of dollars in FEMA reimbursements to San Antonio due to concerns over potential misuse of federal grants for "illegal activities."

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Such situations underscore the importance of stringent oversight when allocating funds for immigration-related services.

Legal and Constitutional Challenges

Providing grants to facilitate changes in immigration status could face significant legal hurdles. The "parole in place" program, which allowed certain undocumented immigrants married to U.S. citizens to remain in the country while applying for permanent residency, was recently blocked by a federal judge.

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This ruling highlights the complex legal landscape surrounding immigration policies and the potential challenges any new initiatives may face.

Encouragement of Illegal Immigration

Assisting noncitizens in changing their immigration status without strict adherence to legal processes may inadvertently encourage illegal immigration. The "parole in place" program faced criticism for potentially incentivizing unlawful entry into the U.S., with opponents arguing that it amounted to amnesty and could lead to increased illegal immigration.

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It's crucial to ensure that immigration policies do not send unintended messages that could compromise the integrity of our immigration system.

Strain on Public Services and Resources

Providing services to assist noncitizens in changing their immigration status could place additional strain on public services and resources. Communities already facing challenges with housing, healthcare, and education may experience increased demand, potentially impacting the quality and availability of services for all residents.

Potential Impact on Employment and Wages

Facilitating changes in immigration status could affect the labor market by increasing the number of work-authorized individuals. While immigration can contribute positively to the economy, an influx of workers in certain sectors might impact employment opportunities and wage levels for U.S. citizens, particularly in industries with high concentrations of immigrant labor.

In conclusion, directing DHS to provide grants for assisting noncitizens in changing their immigration status presents significant challenges. These include the potential misallocation of state resources, misuse of funds, legal complications, encouragement of illegal immigration, strain on public services, and impacts on the labor and housing market. I urge policymakers to carefully weigh these factors and VOTE NO. I encourage all law makers to provide Oregonians with bills that uphold the rule of law and prioritize the well-being of legal U.S. Oregonian Citizens. Enough is enough of putting Oregonian Citizens last.

Thank you.