

**To:** Senate Committee on Business and Labor  
**From:** Martha Sonato, Oregon Law Center  
**Re:** Support for SB 1119  
**Date:** 03/26/2025

**Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, members of the committee on Business and Labor,**

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center, I submit this testimony in support of SB 1119, which would prohibit employers from engaging in unfair immigration-related practices.

The Oregon Law Center is a statewide civil legal aid organization serving low-income clients across a variety of issues that impact their lives. Our clients often come to us with multiple, interconnected legal needs. It's rarely ever simple, which is why we take a big-picture approach to help them navigate their challenges.

SB 1119 fills an important gap in current workplace protections, particularly for workers who may be vulnerable due to their immigration status. The bill prohibits employers from engaging in unfair immigration-related practices, including:

- Threatening to contact federal immigration authorities because an employee has exercised a legal right.
- Taking adverse action against an employee for updating their employment information due to a change in immigration status.

While there are federal statutes that prohibit discrimination based on national origin or citizenship status, SB 1119 specifically addresses employer retaliation related to a change in employees' immigration status or their exercise of legal rights.

### **Why This is Important for Workers**

#### *Updating Employment Information Due to a Change in Immigration Status*

When workers update their employment information due to a change in immigration status—such as obtaining a new visa, renewing Employment Authorization documents, or receiving a green card—they often face unlawful demands to reveal sensitive personal information, such as their status as a domestic violence survivor, their history of persecution based on religious beliefs or sexual orientation, or their marital status. These inquiries are illegal but frequently occur when employees update their immigration documents. Protecting workers from adverse actions for simply updating their information can bring peace of mind and help prevent unfair treatment.

***The Oregon Law Center's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.***



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### **Protection Against Retaliation**

The first prong of SB 1119 is also critical. All workers should feel safe exercising their rights under existing protections and laws. Threatening to contact federal immigration authorities—whether directly or indirectly—leads to serious underreporting of violations, weakens the autonomy of workers, and undermines their ability to care for themselves and their families.

SB 1119 helps protect workers, especially those who may feel vulnerable because of their immigration status. It ensures employees can update their information or exercise their rights without worrying about retaliation or threats to contact immigration authorities. This bill addresses an important gap in protections and encourages fairness for all workers in Oregon.

I urge this committee to support SB 1119 and help create a safer, more just workplace for everyone. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Martha Sonato

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