



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Chair Taylor
Vice-Chair Bonham
Members of the Committee
FR: Catie Theisen, Oregon AFL-CIO
RE: SB 1119 Support

March 26, 2025

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across Oregon and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1119 which aims to help protect immigrant Oregonians from unfair retaliation because of real or perceived immigration status after exercising their rights at work.

Immigrant Oregonians are undoubtedly a critical part of our communities and economy: At 13% of Oregon's economic output, immigrant Oregonians disproportionately contribute to our GDP, with immigrants conservatively responsible for \$33 billion of Oregon's economic output.¹

Further, immigrant Oregonians disproportionately work in jobs paying less than \$38,000 a year with many working in service occupations. Workers in these low-income occupations are particularly vulnerable to fear of retaliation for exercising their rights or speaking up at work. According to research from the Immigrant Research Initiative, "there is little doubt that the 108,000 undocumented immigrants estimated to be in Oregon's labor force are overwhelmingly in these low-wage occupations" ultimately playing a key part in making our economy run.²

As such, these workers deserve to be able to go to work without fear of never returning home at the end of the day – just like any worker in Oregon. SB 1119 aims to do that by adding to the list of unlawful employment practices already in statute, "unfair immigration-related practices" which includes an employer *threatening* to call ICE in response to a worker exercising their rights.

In this time of great federal uncertainty and mass deportations, this policy simply reinforces and clarifies in Oregon state statute that a worker cannot be retaliated against or threatened for their real or presumed citizenship or immigration status. Finally, national origin and assumed or real immigration status are not one in the same. SB 1119 simply specifies protections in this critical moment in our history.

SB 1119 upholds and strengthens Oregon's values: that immigrants are a critical part of our community and workforce and they deserve to be treated with the dignity and respect that all workers deserve – to go to and return from work safely without fear or practice of retaliation each and every day.

¹ https://www.ocpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Oregon_Earning-Range-Report-Final.pdf

² https://www.ocpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Oregon_Earning-Range-Report-Final.pdf