

Co-Chair Sanchez, Co-Chair Lieber and Members of the Committee,

My Name is Dra. Luz Villarroel an Educator for over 55 years in K-Higher Education in Oregon and Washington. Have also served for seven years as the PCC DREAMers Resource Center Coordinator.

I enthusiastically support SB 703/HB 2788, Pathways to Protection and Citizenship. This bill came before you as HB 4085 in 2024, and passed this Committee unanimously. HB 2788/ SB 703 is a bill that will save and strengthen families, improve outcomes in other DHS programs, bolster our workforce and strengthen Oregon's general fund.

Up to 1/3 of Oregonians without an immigration status are actually eligible under federal law for an immigration status. That is thousands of Oregonians who, but for a few hundred dollars, are living in fear, out of the employment mainstream, unable to support their families.

Immigrant and refugee communities make up more than 13% of our state's workforce, yet legal costs prevent many Oregonians from obtaining a more secure immigration status. This bill's one-time support of Oregonians to offset these legal costs will stabilize our workforce.

I support this bill because it will improve the safety of our workforce, community and it will improve the economy for our state and nation. I am a legal service provider as a community volunteer.

Thank you kindly with gratitude and respect for your time and for standing with all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Dra. Luz Villarroel

Former DRC Coordinator and (Retired from 55 years of) serving as a K-Higher Education Educator

Oregon and Washington