

*Testimony in support of SB 599A (2025)*

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kate Suisman. I am an attorney at the Northwest Workers' Justice Project (NWJP). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill. We represent workers in low-wage jobs when bad things happen to them at work: when they are not paid, or are discriminated against for being in a protected class or are retaliated against for speaking up. Finally, we engage in policy advocacy and try to bring the important perspectives of workers in low-wage jobs and immigrant workers to these policy discussions.

NWJP strongly supports SB 599A. This protection has never been more needed. We are already seeing signs of employers, landlords, and others feeling emboldened to treat immigrants unlawfully, based on the hateful anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies coming out of Washington DC.

Citizenship status has no bearing on being a good tenant. This bill lays out many ways to establish one's identity as a renter, and landlords are still free to choose who they rent to, as long as they are not discriminating based on a protected class. There are often overlapping dynamics between national origin, race, language spoken, and immigration status. Oregon should send a clear message that landlords cannot discriminate based on someone's perceived or actual status.

In addition, many immigrant families are "mixed status," meaning members of the family may be documented, or DACA-mented, some on visas, some without papers. Even if you have all your papers in order, you may fear discrimination towards your family unit based on one person's status. This bill makes clear that the whole family is protected from inquiries about status and discrimination based on it.

Now more than ever, immigrant Oregonians are afraid to share personal information which could eventually be used against them by the government. Wherever we can, we should remove the requirement to provide a social security number or provide information about immigration status, unless that information is required to qualify for a government program etc. And even in that case, advocates have successfully argued for the removal of social security numbers in numerous areas such as the 801 form used to report workers' compensation claims in Oregon.

SB 599A is modeled after a provision in [local ordinance](#) in the Portland that has been in effect for years. It will extend a similar protection statewide, ensuring consistency of protections across all communities. New York, Washington, California and Illinois have similar statewide protections- let's join this them at this important time to stand up for immigrants.

Landlords hold power over tenants. Oregon should make sure that that power does not extend to holding someone's actual or perceived immigration status over them or their family.

Thank you for your attention to this important and timely issue.