



April 28, 2025 – Letter of support for House Bill 2586

To: Chair Lew Frederick and Members of the Senate Committee on Education

From: Victoria Francis, Deputy Director, State and Local Initiatives, American Immigration Council

Re: HB 2586: An Act Relating to Nonresident Tuition Exemption for Asylum Seekers

Dear Chair Frederick and members of the Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Victoria Francis, and I am the Deputy Director of State and Local Initiatives at the American Immigration Council (the Council). The Council works to create a more welcoming America – one that provides a fair immigration process for New Americans and adopts policies that consider the vital contributions they make to the U.S. economy.

I am submitting this letter to express the Council's support for removing barriers that keep qualified Oregonians from accessing higher education. To this end, I respectfully encourage the passage of HB 2586, which would permit eligible asylum seekers at public universities in Oregon to access in-state tuition rates.

My organization has worked with leaders in government, business, and civil society across the country to recognize the crucial role immigrants are playing in state and local economies. In order to remain competitive and meet critical workforce shortages, Oregon will need to continue to implement policies that not only attract and retain immigrant talent that complements U.S.-born workers but also build career pathways for immigrants already living in the state. HB 2586 will do just that by making it financially easier for asylum seekers to access public undergraduate and graduate education in the state, thereby increasing economic opportunities for all residents and helping to meet the state's pressing workforce needs.

To help illustrate why this issue is important and why it makes sense to reduce education barriers for all Oregonians, my organization conducted quantitative research using data from the 2023 American Community Survey to highlight the impact immigrants already have in Oregon. What we found is quite striking:¹

- **Oregon was home to more than 404,200 immigrants in 2023, making up 9.5 percent of the state's population.** This community is critical to the state's future workforce: 79.9 percent of immigrant

¹ Available at <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/oregon/>



Oregonians were of working age (ages 16-64) in 2023 compared to 61.5 percent of their U.S.-born counterparts.

- **Immigrants in Oregon are critical to addressing the state's workforce shortages across the skills and education spectrum.** Although they make up 9.5 percent of the state's population, immigrants made up 12.5 percent of workers in the labor force, 16.2 percent of STEM workers, and 17.5 percent of health aides.
- **Immigrant households in Oregon contributed millions of dollars in federal, state, and local taxes and held tremendous spending power.** They paid \$5.6 billion in taxes in 2023 - including \$2.1 billion in state and local taxes - and held \$14.3 billion in spending power that can be reinjected into the state and local economies.

By granting asylum seekers access to in-state tuition rates, Oregon can maximize their economic impact, invest in the state's future workforce, and advance opportunities that benefit all Oregonians. I encourage the Senate Committee on Education to support the passage of HB 2586.

Thank you for your consideration,

Victoria Francis
Deputy Director, State and Local Initiatives
American Immigration Council