

Submitter:

Rick Varnum

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB2586

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

My name is Rick Varnum. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB2586. I respectfully encourage its passage, thereby allowing eligible asylum seekers at public universities in Oregon to access in-state tuition rates.

I urge passage of this bill for the following reasons:

- Asylum seekers have uprooted themselves from their countries of origin because of the dire situations in which they found themselves. HB2586, in keeping with Oregon's tradition of welcoming migrants, puts material substance into our identity as a Sanctuary State.

- In many parts of the world today migrants find themselves fearful and threatened. This legislation would, if passed, send a message of welcome and belonging.

- Immigrants applying for asylum are pursuing an internationally recognized human right.

They are legally present in the United States while their applications await resolution. HB2586 provides some support for them in what is a very challenging journey.

- Asylum seekers in Oregon are our neighbors and contribute noticeably to the life of our communities. Many are putting down roots in our State and deserve the opportunity to pursue further education at the cost level that in-state tuition allows. •

Asylum seekers often wait many years to have their cases processed. It stands to reason that, during the waiting time, they ought to be afforded the opportunity to better their education at a reasonable cost.

- HB 2586 will help asylum seekers increase their educational and skill levels thereby helping them become productive, self-sufficient Oregonians in the future.

- HB 2586 will help put asylum seekers on a path to self-sufficiency.

- In the coming years Oregon businesses, farms, and industries, if they are to remain competitive, will need well educated immigrant workers. Allowing our asylum seeking population access to in-state tuition now is a reasonable investment in our own future.

- Immigrants in our state currently provide much of the labor, both skilled and unskilled, that Oregon needs. This bill will help the State have the appropriately educated workforce it will need in the future.

- Immigrants in Oregon already contribute greatly to the tax-base. Educating these future workers and tax-payers seems like a wise investment for Oregon and its future.

Once again, I urge you to pass this important legislation.

Thank you for reading my testimony. I strongly urge that you will support passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Rick Varnum
1310 E 20th Avenue
Eugene, RO 97403