



State Senator Kayse Jama

Senate District 24 (D-East Portland)

Native land of Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other tribes that made their homes along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers

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SB 1560 TWO-PAGER **Updating Immigration Terminology in Oregon State Laws**

1. Historical Context of the Word “Alien”

- In 1970 U.S. President George Washington approved the Naturalization Act, providing the first guidelines for granting national citizenship. This was when the word ‘alien’ was first introduced referring to "foreigner" or "outsider."
- The Oxford English dictionary defines an alien as “Opposed, Repugnant.”
- Over the past decades, the word “alien” has been used to vilify immigrants and asylum seekers who then become targets of anger and hate crimes. It weaponizes systems, agencies and institutions to express bigotry and hatred without using overtly racist language.
- Immigrants and refugees arriving in the U.S as their safe haven from either fleeing war or seeking better opportunities are forced to fit into this divisive and hurtful narrative of being an “alien.”
- Existing federal law, for purposes of various provisions related to immigration, defines “alien” to mean a person who is not a citizen or national of the United States.
- Existing state law uses the word “alien” on its own and within various other terms to refer to persons in provisions relating to, among other things, education, housing, natural resources, employment, probate, social services, drivers’ licenses, firearm permits, service in the state militia, and criminal punishment.
- In April 2021, President Biden's administration ordered the U.S immigration enforcement agencies to stop using words like “alien” or “illegal alien” to refer to immigrants.

2. What does SB 1560 do?

- Passage of this bill would revise existing state law provisions to refer to those persons using “non-citizen” instead of the word “alien.”
- Additionally, there will be a clarification that the intent of the Legislature in enacting this measure is to make only non-substantive changes that remove the dehumanizing term “alien” from all Oregon code sections. Nothing in this measure shall be interpreted to make any substantive change to existing law, including, but not limited to, eligibility for federal programs or benefits that are available to a person who meets the definition of “alien” under state or federal law.

3. Suggested Talking Points: Why is this bill important?

- The effects of this word are dehumanizing and contribute to racism as well as impacting the physical and mental well being of immigrants and refugees.
- As a state that is openly welcoming refugees, we need to create a society where immigrants are not othered and defined by societal prejudices. We should embrace Oregon as a part of a nation of immigrants and remove the word “alien” to reflect the values of our state.
- Oregonians who come in as immigrants or refugees, work hard and should be able to feel that they are a part of our communities. The goal of this legislation is to remove the word ‘alien’ from existing state laws and replace it with “non-citizen” to refer to a person who is not a citizen or national of the United States.
- Our goal as Oregonians is to create a society where immigrants are not othered and defined by societal prejudices. Instead, we should embrace Oregon as a part of a nation of immigrants and remove the word “alien” to reflect our state's values.
- *Share your personal stories*

4. What are some states who have made these changes?

- States such as California and Colorado last year removed the word ‘alien’ from their statutes.

5. Next Steps: Sign up to testify (**keep it 2 minutes**) or submit a written testimony

Date & Time	Committee Name	Committee Member	Status
Public Hearing on 2/9 at 8 AM	Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation	Sen Prozanski, Dembrow, Gelser Blouin, Manning, Thacher, Heard, Linthicum	Confirmed