



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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### **Oregon Legislature Passes Bill to Protect Vulnerable Immigrant Youth**

*SB 572 would create a pathway for vulnerable youth between the ages of 18 and 21 to petition an Oregon court to appoint a trusted adult as a guardian*

SALEM, OR – The Oregon House voted today to allow vulnerable immigrant youths in Oregon to petition the court for a guardian. [Senate Bill 572](#) allows vulnerable youth to ask a court to appoint a trusted adult as their guardian after they turn 18. This legislation would apply to vulnerable youths ages 18-21 who are eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status, and who cannot be reunified with one or more of the person's parents due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment that occurred when the person was a minor. The bill would help protect an estimated 70-100 vulnerable youth in Oregon each year.

“The goal of the bill is to protect and support young people who are vulnerable because they have been abandoned, abused or neglected by a parent and are at risk of deportation to a country where they face harmful conditions,” said [Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon](#) (D-Woodburn), who carried the bill on the House floor. “In light of all of the difficulties that young people have faced in the last year, now is the time to fix Oregon’s laws on guardianship to align with federal law. Many of our neighboring states have made this change to their laws, it is past time we did as well.”

With the passage of SB 572, Oregon becomes the fifth state in the nation to adopt these protections, joining California, Washington, Colorado, and New York. The youth must consent to the guardianship and it must be designed to encourage development of maximum self-reliance and independence of the youth.

“This bill protects some of our state’s most vulnerable young people,” said [Rep. Ricki Ruiz](#) (D-Gresham), a co-sponsor of the bill. “Vulnerable immigrant youth are not only navigating the culture shock of a new country, but they may be dealing with additional traumas as well. Giving them the option to petition the courts for a guardian helps ensure they can feel safe and get the resources they need to be successful.”

SB 572 passed with unanimous support and now heads to the Governor's desk.

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