

Dear House Committee on Housing and Human Services,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 2508 requiring DHS to award grants to refugee resettlement agencies to provide services to refugees arriving in Oregon.

I am currently the volunteer coordinator for Tibbetts House Refugee Ministry at St. Ignatius Catholic Church in Portland. We work with Catholic Charities of Oregon to provide temporary housing for newly arriving refugees. Over the last two years, I have worked closely with Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program, and have seen first hand their struggle to continue to provide necessary services and case management to newly arriving refugees while the federal government cuts funding and support for refugee services.

In addition to loss of federal funds, the current housing crisis in Oregon taxes refugee resettlement agencies as they struggle to secure affordable housing for refugee families hoping to start a new life in Oregon. HB 2508 could provide much needed relief to refugee resettlement organizations by acknowledging the emergency the federal government has created and providing access to funds needed to support families adjusting to their new life in Oregon.

Please feel free to contact me with any follow up questions or for further comment.

Sincerely,
Kerri Babin
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