

Submitter: Luke Glaze

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB3176

To: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

RE: HB 3176

Good afternoon, Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Scharf, and members of the committee:

My name is Luke Glaze and I am the Executive Director of Salem For Refugees. I have the distinct honor and privilege of serving refugees and forced migrants in Marion/Polk counties as well as new efforts to resettle refugees in Linn and Benton County through our sister site, Corvallis For Refugees.

Through the visionary leadership of Toc and the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement and strong legislative partners in Senator Jama, Rep Reynolds and many others, HB 3176 seeks to provide a similar service model to Asylum seekers to that which is currently provided to refugees. Although we must continue to strive to see significant changes at the federal level to help expedite the asylum process and decrease the wait time for work authorization, there is work that can be done here in our state to ensure that every Oregonian is welcomed and given the tools to thrive in their new home. We applaud these efforts and support the vision of serving asylum seekers in our state.

While we support this bill, there are two concerns that we want you to hear. First, while this bill's language is very broad, it is built on a current model of serving asylum seekers in the Portland metro area through a Welcome Center. We want to continue to advocate for a nimble and statewide model that sees this work move beyond its historic roots in the Portland metro area. Just as refugees are now being resettled throughout the Willamette Valley, Asylum Seekers are spread throughout our state. For this reason, we need statewide solutions and we need to leverage the networks of resettlement agencies and culturally specific CBOs to do this work. By going beyond an institutional model, or a Portland-centric model you will leverage new communities of support, volunteerism and in-kind supports that many CBOs are connected to. We need to ensure that the model of service designed in this bill will allow for Asylum seekers to receive services in their community and with trusted organizations throughout the state. We would like to see language that ensures that a no wrong door approach for asylum seekers requesting services.

Secondly, to ensure that services are being provided to immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees as outlined in the bill. Our recommendation is to include elements of SB 1000, "Welcoming Refugees Bill" to cover a broader range of services and to support

other neglected populations, such as Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees. Our state is home to thousands of Ukrainian parolees who have received very little support in comparison to refugees and Afghan parolees through our state legislature. By combining these efforts, we would ensure that Refugees, Ukrainian Parolees and Asylum seekers would receive the critical support needed. As a resettlement agency we are always advocating for legislation that allows our offices to support refugees and forced migrants equally throughout our state.

To wrap things up, our vision at Salem For Refugees is to see all refugees as valued, thriving contributing members of our society. The impact of this investment could be significant in regards to health and prosperity of our community. Let us not lose sight on what this investment could mean for the futures of those forced from their countries and who have chosen to make Oregon their new home.

Thank you.