

Submitter: Kerri Babin

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB4159

As someone who has worked both professionally and as a volunteer to support migrants and refugees in the Portland area for over 20 years, I strongly support the passage of HB 4159. In my role as a professional researching housing programs for newcomers in the United States, I have not come across a more innovative and progressive plan to proactively welcome newcomers. Instead, what I see repeatedly is state and local officials creating "migrant crises" because they lack a plan or informed approach on how to provide services to newcomers- the vast majority of whom have been legally admitted into the United States to pursue asylum, and eagerly seek to support themselves as soon as the US government processes their employment authorization.

With HB4159, Oregon has the unique opportunity to set a standard for the rest of the country with how to proactively and humanely support newcomers as they pursue their legal right to seek asylum in the United States. During this election year, we can show the rest of the country that migration is not a crisis when systems of support are in place to set migrants up for success. The data on immigration are clear: the US economy depends on newcomer populations. An initial investment in the successful resettlement of migrants in Oregon will result in benefits for the Oregon economy outweighing the cost of programs proposed in HB4159. According to J.Daniel Kim of the Wharton School of Business, "What we find, with overwhelming evidence, is that immigrants act more as job creators than they act as job takers in the United States," <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/immigrants-expand-the-us-economy/>.

Please take action to be a leader in innovation in immigration by showing the rest of the country that it is possible to effectively and humanely support newcomers through support of HB4519.

One of the things that I love about being an Oregonian is that we are a welcoming state, repeatedly demonstrating to the rest of the country how to successfully implement progressive and inclusive policies while maintaining a thriving economy. I urge you to take this opportunity to be a leader in migration policy in the United States. We can turn the narrative around immigration from fear mongering to the success story that it truly is.