

SB 149 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Action Date: 04/08/25

Action: Do pass with amendments and requesting referral to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Engrossed.)

Vote: 6-0-0-0

Yeas: 6 - Broadman, Gelser Blouin, Manning Jr, McLane, Prozanski, Thatcher

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 4/7, 4/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

This measure makes technical changes to and modifies two definitions under ORS 411.139, pursuant to which the Department of Human Services (DHS) awards contracts to eligible entities to assist refugees. First, the measure expands the definition of eligible entities to include culturally responsive organizations serving diverse populations and communities. Second, the measure expands the definition of refugees to include individuals pursuing immigration assistance who are not receiving support services from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement and who have lived in Oregon for 24 months or less. The measure also clarifies that individuals seeking formal refugee status or having former refugee status are eligible for assistance and that entities that previously contracted with the U.S. Department of State are eligible for DHS contracts.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Funding
- Extended case management programs
- Circumstances of newcomers to Oregon

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

This amendment replaced the measure.

BACKGROUND:

"Refugees are individuals or groups of people in grave danger because their home government is unwilling or unable to protect them or may be actively persecuting them." Oregon Department of Human Services. [Refugee and Eligible Immigration Status](#). People who flee their countries are interviewed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to evaluate whether they meet the legal requirements to qualify as refugees. *Id.* The federal government allows a certain number of refugees to immigrate to the United States each year. *Id.*

In 2019, the Legislative Assembly enacted House Bill 2508, appropriating \$4.5 million to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to award grants to supplement federal funds and to mitigate against a reduction in support for refugee resettlement. SB 2508 significantly increased the duration of support services from nine to 24 months and specifically invested in culturally responsive employment services.