



Pacific Refugee Support Group
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Submitter: Peter Newbegin, Executive Director, Pacific Refugee Support Group
Measure: HB2586

Chair Reardon, members of the House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development, my name is Peter Newbegin, and I am the Executive Director of Pacific Refugee Support Group. I'm submitting this testimony in support of HB2586, permitting an asylum seeker who is a student at a public university in this state to receive an exemption from nonresident tuition and fees.

Per 8 U.S.C. § 1158 of the United States Federal Code, anyone physically present, or who arrives in the United States, may apply for asylum, whether or not they have entered at a designated port of entry. Individuals who have entered the U.S. - even without authorization - can legally apply for asylum. Those who have submitted such applications are legally present in the United States while their applications are pending.

People seeking asylum in our state have built lives, friendships, and businesses that benefit all Oregonians. Granting in-state tuition to these neighbors would recognize the contributions of these individuals as members of our community, and enable the aspirations of students to fulfill their dreams absent the financial burden of non-resident tuition.

Seeking asylum is a human right, codified in international law and US Federal Code. HB2586 eliminates an artificial distinction between students due to their immigration status. On behalf of PRSG, and all communities seeking safety in our great state, I urge you to pass this important legislation.

Peter Newbegin
Executive Director
Pacific Refugee Support Group