



Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Legislature

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Luke Glaze, and I serve as the Executive Director of Salem For Refugees, an organization dedicated to welcoming and supporting refugee families as they rebuild their lives in Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 476, which will help internationally educated professionals overcome barriers to entering Oregon's workforce.

All refugees come to the United States with barriers to overcome. Some arrive with limited English proficiency, little to no formal work history, and the lasting effects of trauma, making their integration into the workforce particularly challenging. Others come to the U.S. already proficient in English and with strong educational backgrounds, yet they still face undue barriers due to complex and restrictive recertification processes. Too often, their previous work history, experience, and education have little bearing on the path to regaining professional licensure. SB 476 takes critical steps to ensure that these individuals, who bring valuable expertise, are given a fair and transparent process to reenter their respective fields.

Oregon is in urgent need of skilled professionals in healthcare, education, and other essential sectors. Not only are these positions in high demand, but professionals with lived refugee experience bring with them invaluable strengths that benefit our communities. Their personal journeys often equip them with deep compassion, cross-cultural communication skills, multilingual abilities, and a unique understanding of the diverse populations they serve. By streamlining licensing processes and providing targeted support, SB 476 allows Oregon to tap into this immense potential, ensuring our workforce reflects the rich diversity and resilience of our state.

At Salem For Refugees, we have seen firsthand the challenges faced by internationally educated professionals seeking to contribute their expertise. The reforms outlined in SB 476 would remove unnecessary barriers and allow these individuals to thrive, benefiting both them and the broader Oregon community. I urge the committee to pass SB 476 and help Oregon build a more inclusive and economically vibrant workforce.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Luke Glaze

Executive Director
Salem For Refugees