

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee,

My name is Marilyn Grendele and I am the Chairperson of the Social Justice Committee at Cedar Hills United Church of Christ in Beaverton, OR. I am writing to discuss SB 194, the “Oregon’s New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act.” This bill aims to create coordinated access to support services for new Oregonians, ensuring they can find the necessary emergency aid promptly.

SB 149 expands the Extended Case Management program for refugees and other community members holding US status, providing resettlement agencies and CBOs with additional resources to assist families beyond traditional resettlement timelines. The bill also enhances the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement’s capacity to apply for and manage grants, reducing reliance solely on legislative funding.

By supporting newly arrived immigrant and refugee families, SB 149 will coordinate with existing housing and emergency shelter systems in Oregon, alleviating pressure on these services. The bill increases capacity so that families do not have to wait for extended periods to receive support through mainstream services.

The bill emphasizes the importance of enabling all communities to thrive without creating competition between them. Immigrants contribute significantly to the economy, schools, churches, and broader communities. They often arrive after arduous journeys and face bureaucratic challenges upon entry, necessitating support to begin their new lives.

This bill represents an opportunity for Oregon to invest in welcoming its newest residents effectively. Given the current uncertainties faced by this community, your vote for the Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Program would help ensure safety and integration for new Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Marilyn Grendele