

Submitter:

Kaitlin Pabo-Eulberg

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB149

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

My name is Kaitlin and I am a chaplain serving within Providence and I am an ordained Lutheran pastor who lives in SW Portland. I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 194, the "Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act", because we are stronger as a state when we support immigrants who contribute to our economy and yet are experiencing healthcare barriers and general anxiety around our current presidential administration.

This bill will do exactly what it says - create coordinated access to the stabilizing support services for new Oregonians. When a new immigrant community member arrives, they will be able to find the emergency support that they need in a timely way, so they can shelter and house their families, enroll in school and healthcare services, and begin a new life contributing to their community. When immigrants are supported, they give back to our communities through working and contributing to our state taxes.

SB 149 expands the Extended Case Management program for refugees and other community members who are eligible, which will enable resettlement agencies and other CBO's to provide additional assistance to families who may need a little extra support when they time out of traditional resettlement services.

By supporting newly arrived immigrant Oregonian families, refugee Oregonians, and having additional case management and stabilization available for those who need it, SB 149 will both coordinate with and alleviate pressure on the mainstream housing and emergency shelter system in Oregon. SB 149 provides additional capacity so that when a new community member arrives with their children, they cannot wait outside for the estimated 6+ months it currently takes to be supported through mainstream shelter and housing services.

We have shown that we can work together to ensure that ALL communities thrive. This bill was created with the commitment to the thriving of all communities. We are unwilling to pit the needs of one new Oregonian community against each other or other communities. Immigrants contributions to our economy, our schools, our churches, our communities are immeasurable

As a chaplain, I meet immigrants when they are faced with serious illness. It breaks my heart that the immigrants I meet are not just juggling how to deal with feeling terrible and dealing with serious health issues, but also navigating housing insecurity

and food insecurity. These are people who are contributing so much to our society and yet are faced with the anxiety of falling through the cracks and becoming houseless or not being able to feed our families. That is too much for someone who has already left their home country due to war, violence, or poverty. Our immigrants deserve to be supported.

People move - and like any new neighbor, a little bit of support and welcome goes a long way for our refugee and immigrant neighbors. This bill is an opportunity for Oregon to choose to invest in welcoming its newest neighbors well. In a time of great uncertainty for this community, your vote for the Oregon New Neighbors Coordinated Access Program will mean that a new generation of Oregonians feels safer and welcomed in our beautiful state.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,  
Rev Kaitlin Pabo-Eulberg, board certified chaplain