



April 6, 2025

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

My name is Alonso Oliveros, and I live in Polk County. I work as a Program Associate for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a non-profit Quaker organization that brings together people of all faiths and backgrounds to challenge injustice and build peace around the globe. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 149, the “Oregon’s New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act”, because immigrant Oregonians who’ve faced racial, religious persecution or because of their nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion without protections from their own governments will have an opportunity to be welcomed for integration into our society by compassionate and caring organizations. I have personal friends who have sacrificed much to aid our country during wartime efforts and have paid dearly for an opportunity to save their families from threats of repression and in many cases, unspeakable harms and even death. Aided by Community-Based Organized (CBOs), they were allowed an opportunity to experience what a welcoming society with warm welcome and appreciation for their sacrifices.

This bill will do exactly what it says - create coordinated access to 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.

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. The Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act is the result of refugee resettlement agencies, immigrant-serving CBOs, and government agency collaboration working together to ensure that we continue to welcome new neighbors well. It reflects the **shared need** for coordinated access to existing systems of support for new Oregonians.

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. SB 149 will create infrastructure for a coordinated system of reception. It will provide the resources needed for Oregonians who have arrived seeking safety and protection to find housing, health care, employment, and education opportunities. This ensures our new neighbors can achieve their own goals of successfully contributing to our state.

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.

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 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 feel safer and welcomed in our beautiful state.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Alonso Oliveros