



Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Natalie Lerner and I am writing today on behalf of the Portland Immigrant Rights Coalition (PIRC) in strong support of SB 149-3. PIRC is a 501c3 that operates a statewide immigrant rights hotline that operates to respond to detentions, refer community members to resources including shelter, and activate rapid response. At PIRC, we believe that all Oregonians, including immigrant Oregonians, deserve to thrive. We know that coordinating support for Oregon's newest neighbors is a core piece of creating a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant state.

Over the past year, PIRC has supported in the reception of newcomers through our immigrant rights hotline. Our volunteers and board have seen firsthand the reality that many children sleep outside, in tents, or in cars when they first arrive in Oregon, and often for months on end, due to our broken family shelter and housing systems. These families have told PIRC dispatchers that they want to stabilize – they are seeking legal status, educating their children, and becoming financially contributing members of our state. But because of federal laws, these families face barriers to stabilization. We know that immigrants contribute enormously to our state's economy, and with a small investment upfront, these communities can quickly integrate into the fabric of our state.

We also appreciate that this bill is both scalable and represents a collaboration between refugee agencies and organizations that serve other communities of immigrants. This bill represents an opportunity to honor the work across the spectrum of the immigration justice space in Oregon and to support a broad swathe of newcomers to our state. We urge you to pass SB 149-3.

Best,

Natalie Lerner
PIRC Board Member