

Submitter: Dylan Jensen

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 Dylan Jensen, and I am the Program Coordinator for the Refugee Services department at Catholic Charities Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for SB 194, the "Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act." This bill is an important step forward in enhancing the services available to newly arrived immigrants, refugees, and asylees in Oregon. As someone who works directly with these communities, I can attest to how critical it is that we continue to improve and expand access to services that support their successful integration into our state. While Oregon has made strides in supporting new arrivals through existing programs, there are still gaps in the system. SB 194 will build on current services by creating a more streamlined and coordinated approach, ensuring that families can access housing, healthcare, education, and employment services more efficiently and in a timely manner. The bill's expansion of services like Extended Case Management will address the needs of those who require additional support as they transition from resettlement programs to long-term stability.

As the program coordinator at Catholic Charities Oregon, I work with families who are often navigating complex systems for housing, healthcare, and education. While the current support system is valuable, there are challenges such as long wait times for certain services and fragmented coordination between various agencies. SB 194 will improve these processes by increasing the capacity of community-based organizations and resettlement agencies to provide consistent, wrap-around support. This means fewer delays for families who need critical assistance and more efficient use of available resources.

By enhancing Oregon's ability to coordinate services for newly arrived families, SB 194 will alleviate pressure on the mainstream shelter and housing systems, which are often overburdened and unable to meet the urgent needs of immigrant families. It will also allow us to better support families with children, who are currently facing wait times of up to six months before they can access housing and shelter.

This bill is the result of collaboration between resettlement agencies, immigrant-serving organizations, and government partners, all working together to ensure that we continue to welcome new Oregonians in a way that reflects our values of compassion and community. SB 194 will create a stronger, more effective infrastructure that allows us to provide housing, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities for new arrivals, enabling them to thrive in Oregon and contribute to the growth and prosperity of our state.

The support for immigrants and refugees is an investment in Oregon's future. These individuals and families are already contributing to our communities, our economy,

and our culture. By improving the services they receive through SB 194, we are ensuring that they have the tools they need to build successful, fulfilling lives here. I urge you to support SB 194 as it strengthens and improves the system of services that help our newest neighbors become integral members of our state. By passing this bill, Oregon can continue to be a place where all individuals, regardless of their background, can find opportunity, stability, and belonging. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. Sincerely,

Dylan Jensen  
Program Coordinator, Refugee Services  
Catholic Charities Oregon