

Testimony Letter

EMO

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

My name is Corbin Katner and I am a dayspace worker in a houseless services nonprofit in District 23, Multnomah County. I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 194, the "Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act", because I have seen firsthand the unique struggles of immigrants and refugees trying to get settled here, and believe this bill addresses those challenges in effective ways.

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.

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 also provides additional capacity so that when a new community member arrives with their children, they need not 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.

At its heart, this bill is about acknowledging and affirming the diversity of experience in our Oregonian communities. Immigrants and refugees are a severely underserved sect of the population, and this disparity is even more visible working in houseless services. I frequently see the most effective housing resources fail to benefit immigrants and refugees because they fail to account for their unique

experience and needs. Everyone moves - and like any new neighbor, a little bit of support and welcome goes a long way for our refugee and immigrant friends. 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,

Corbin Katner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Corbin Katner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.