

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

My name is Gabe Nafziger and I am a Quaker Voluntary Service Fellow doing a year of service at the Northeast Emergency Food Program one NE Portland and I am a resident of district 23.

I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 194, the "Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act",

In my experience over the past 6 months working at the largest food pantry in Oregon. I noticed that clearly the largest percentage of the clients that come to the pantry most often speak non-English first languages including but not limited to Spanish, Chinese, Ukrainian, Russian, Persian, and many others. This experience has allowed me to see first hand the demographics of people that are in need of the most support from society(government). It is very clear to me that there is a pressing need for more resources and funding for minority communities in Oregon. I feel that SB 194 will be incredibly effective at addressing the causes that drive the demographics at the food pantry.

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 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 put the needs of one new Oregonian community against each other or other communities.

In my time learning about poverty and interacting with less fortunate people I have learned one very important thing. Firstly prevention coupled with restoration is the most effective path to reducing poverty. If we support our newly arrived neighbors right away then it is vastly more likely that they will not ever need to access the food pantry system or other forms of support in the future. If we want new immigrants to contribute their best to our economy, culture, and community. We must give them the services, tools, and ability to restart their lives and prosper in Oregon.

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,

Gabriel John Hurst Nafziger

Quaker Voluntary Service Fellow

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon: Northeast Emergency Food Program