

Submitter: Salem Heideman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB149

Sample Testimony Template

(Please personalize this for yourself)

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee,
My name is Salem Heideman, and I am a community organizer and a released minister with Hillsboro Friends Church. I live in Senate District 23. I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 194, the "Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act", because people who enter our state as new immigrants and refugees deserve support to help them adjust to the many life changes that come along with that experience.

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.

SB 149 provides additional capacity so that when a new community member arrives with their children, they will not have to 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's culture, economy, and communities.

Picking up one's life and moving somewhere new can be scary, overwhelming, and hard. Many of the folks I know who have immigrated somewhere share that the logistics are a huge source of stress and exhaustion. It is my hope that we can pass this bill to ensure that Oregon has an extra layer of support and assistance for people experiencing such a transition.

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,

-Salem Heideman