

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

My name is Michael King, and I am the Senior Pastor at Suburban Christian Church in Corvallis. I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 149, the “Oregon’s New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act”, because it helps give immigrants who are hoping to make a new home in Oregon the best possible support as they transition to life here. I have lived overseas several different times in my life, and moving to a new country and culture is incredibly difficult. Everything is new. But having the right resources and support can make all the difference.

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.

Oregonians have shown that we can work together to ensure that ALL communities thrive. In a time when many forces in our society are trying to pit us against each other I hope that we can be a state that is unwilling to pit the needs of one new Oregonian community against other communities in the state. I believe that as citizens of this great country and state we are called to be—and that we are quite capable of being—better than that.

In my faith tradition there is a large focus on welcoming in the orphan, the widow, and the foreigner—people who traditionally have less access to power and resources. Our local congregation has tried to do this by partnering with a local CBO to welcome refugees at the airport and walk alongside them as they navigate their first year here. Additionally, when federal funding for refugee resettlement was abruptly cut off our congregation raised nearly \$10,000 dollars to help keep local CBO partners running and doing this work.

We put our time and money where our mouth is, and we believe in this work. We are urging our state government to do the same.

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,

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