

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

My name is Chris Amirault and I am a volunteer at Salem for Refugees (SFR). I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 149, Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act. My work with SFR clients has demonstrated their commitment to becoming engaged, active members of the Salem community and has enriched our community in the process.

In the last two years, our family has provided initial housing for newly arrived Afghan families, and I have taught many new neighbors foundational English language skills. As a result, I have gotten to know quite a bit about the experiences of dozens of immigrants, and specifically their extraordinary needs as they transition into a new home and community. This bill will create coordinated access to critical, stabilizing support services for new Oregonians, helping them to find timely emergency support that enables them to house their families, enroll in school and healthcare services, and begin their new life.

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. A result of refugee resettlement agencies, immigrant-serving CBOs, and government agency collaboration working together, SB 149 can ensure that we continue to welcome new neighbors well.

Our family has met new neighbors at the Portland airport, provided initial housing for two newly arrived Afghan families, and shared our Thanksgiving table with them. Our close relationship to these families reveals the importance of the critical services that SB 149 can provide. In a time of great uncertainty for this community, your vote to support SB 149 will mean that a new generation of Oregonians feels safer and welcome in our beautiful state.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Amirault". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" being more prominent than the last name "Amirault".

Chris Amirault  
2060 High St SE  
Salem OR 97302  
8 April 2025