

Submitter:

Martha King

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB149

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

My name Martha King and I am a Corvallis resident, counselor, and member of Suburban Christian Church. I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 149, the "Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act". Over the 8 years that I have lived in Oregon I have been so encouraged by the way that our community has worked to become a more welcoming place to people from around the world. Welcoming immigrant and refugee are a high value for me because of my faith. I love the experience of worshipping, shopping, playing Parks and Rec volleyball, etc. with people of so many racial and cultural backgrounds – it enriches my life!

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.

During a time of division and uncertainty in our country, it may be tempting to pull back to just take care of "our own". But immigrants built this country and continue to be a vital part of our success in every sphere of life. Passing SB 149 would ensure needed coordination and support so that all communities can thrive. Let's remain firm in our Oregon value of wisely caring for everyone, including those who went through lengthy legal processes to come make their lives here.

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 thoughtful consideration,

Martha King