

Submitter: Mohammad Ilias Alami

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB149

My name is Ilias Alami, and I serve as Director of Grants at Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW). For over four decades, LCSNW has supported the resettlement of thousands of refugees and immigrants across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. In that time, we have witnessed the incredible resilience and strength of families starting over, often with nothing but hope and the backpacks on their backs.

I know firsthand many families and friends who have received services well beyond the federally funded 90-day window, and the impact has been profound. The support they received through Extended Case Management (ECM) helped them not just survive, but begin to thrive—finding employment, enrolling children in school, accessing healthcare, and most importantly, building a sense of belonging.

For many who arrive in Oregon knowing no one, it is the resettlement agencies—our staff and our volunteers—who become their first friends and chosen family. ECM lays the foundation for these relationships. It transforms what could be an isolating and overwhelming experience into one of connection, trust, and hope. It helps families feel supported instead of fearful in an unfamiliar environment.

SB 149 acknowledges the reality that resettlement is not complete in 90 days. It provides a critical infrastructure to ensure coordinated, long-term support for new Oregonians as they navigate the complex systems of daily life—from housing and healthcare to education and employment.

Oregon has long stood as a beacon of welcome. By passing SB 149, the state reaffirms its commitment to compassion, community, and opportunity for all. I urge you to support this legislation and invest in the future of our newest neighbors—and by extension, the future of Oregon itself.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to ensuring that Oregon remains a place where all can find dignity, belonging, and opportunity.

Sincerely,
Ilias Alami