

Submitter: Joseph Snyder Snyder

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 is Joseph (Joe) Snyder and I am a retired rural veterinarian and member of Multnomah Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). My wife, Jane, is a retired school teacher who taught middle school in our rural community and continues to teach English to immigrants and refugees now that we live in Portland. We are both active with Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon as either current or past board members. I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 194, the "Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act", because, in these troubled times, it is especially important that we, as a state, support the immigrants who are so vital to our future and to our communities.

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 CBOs to provide additional assistance to families who may need a little extra support when they time out of traditional resettlement services.

In our experience in rural SW Oregon, we came to know and know of many recent immigrants who were vital assets to our communities, some of whom had to leave the country for lack of the kind of resources SB 149 will provide. It was heartbreaking, an also a great loss to our community for humanitarian reasons but at least as importantly for the social, technical, financial and religious resources we lost with the loss of these people, from farm laborers to social workers to pastors. Here in Portland, we see the same kinds of positive energy and resources being poured into our larger community by the many immigrants and refugees among us. They need our support.

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,

Dr. Joseph Snyder