

Submitter: Barbara Gray

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 Barbara Gray and I am a member of the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Corvallis, OR. I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 149, the "Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act", because I believe immigrants should be welcomed into our communities with a solid foundation of support services so that they can be successful in their transition to their new "home."

The organization Corvallis for Refugees (CFR) has put in place a network of services that help newly arrived immigrants become familiar with the community in such ways as navigating the public school system and medical services, among many other things. Unfortunately, due to Trump's executive orders, the CFR Site Manager and Case Manager positions had to be eliminated. This has a negative impact on the ability of this organization (and others like it) to address the needs of new immigrants. It is imperative to have coordinated access to the stabilizing support services for new Oregonians.

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. The Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act is the result of refugee resettlement agencies, immigrant-serving CBOs, and government agency collaboration working together to ensure that we continue to welcome new neighbors well. SB 149 will create infrastructure for a coordinated system of reception. It will provide the resources needed for Oregonians who have arrived seeking safety and protection to find housing, health care, employment, and education opportunities.

Our lives are made richer by the presence of those who have a different cultural heritage and background; we can learn from each other. Immigrants make valuable contributions to our economy, our schools, our churches, and our communities. This bill is an opportunity 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 feel

safer and welcomed in our beautiful state. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration

Sincerely,  
Barbara Gray