

Submitter: Carla Shryock
On Behalf Of: Salem for Refugees
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB149

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

My name is Carla Shryock and I am a local volunteer with Salem for Refugees. I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 149, the "Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act", because I have been an up-close witness to how housing, employment and case management services have helped our new neighbors acclimate to Oregon and become productive members of our society.

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. SB 149 will create infrastructure for a coordinated system of reception. It will provide the resources needed for those who have arrived seeking safety and protection to find housing, health care, employment and education opportunities and become valued and successful contributors to our state.

My experience volunteering with refugees to find employment and learn or increase their English language skills has given me a first-hand view of the resourcefulness and commitment of our new neighbors. They want to contribute and succeed in their new environment, and this bill will go a long way to providing the resources they need.

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 timme and thoughtful consideration,

Carla Shryock