

April 9, 2025

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and committee members,

I am writing to advocate passage of SB 149, the “Oregon’s New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act,” based on the current high level of unmet need for coordinated access to stabilizing support services for new Oregonians.

Passage of SB 149 ensures that 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.

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 and 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 agencies collaborating to ensure that we continue to be able to welcome newcomers and help them transition smoothly to life in a new country. It responds to the shared benefit of and need for coordinated access to existing systems of support for new Oregonians.

SB 149 provides additional capacity so that when a new community member arrives with their children, they need not wait outside for the estimated 6+ months it currently takes to be supported through mainstream shelter and housing services.

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. This ensures our new neighbors can achieve their own goals of successfully contributing to our state.

In a time of great uncertainty for this community, passage of the Oregon New Neighbors Coordinated Access Program will mean that a new generation of Oregonians feels safer and welcome in our beautiful state.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Kristen Grainger
Salem, Oregon