



April 9, 2025

RE: Support for SB 149

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

My name is Paige Spence and I am the Director of Government Relations at the Oregon Nurses Association. I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 194, the “Oregon’s New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act”. Providing long-term case management support to refugee Oregonians is critical to the health and well-being of these communities.

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. The Oregon New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act funds crucial services like rent assistance, English As a Second Language classes, help finding employment and other kinds of support integrating into Oregon.

Refugees are at a higher risk of experiencing homelessness, food insecurity and other challenges that lead to worse health outcomes. Many refugees arrive in Oregon with mental and physical health challenges, these individuals need the extended case management services funded through SB 149 in order to thrive in Oregon.

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,

Paige Spence
Director of Government Relations
Oregon Nurses Association