

Submitter: Genevieve Halkett

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 Genevieve Halkett and I am a full time ESOL instructor and EPIC coordinator at Chemeketa Community College. I am writing to advocate for the passage of SB 149,

the "Oregon's New Neighbors Coordinated Access Act", because this support directly impacts our students and community. 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.

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. It reflects the shared need for coordinated access to existing systems of support for new Oregonians.

In the Empowering Professional Immigrant Careers (EPIC) program, which helps those with degrees from their country prepare to work in their careers in Oregon, I encounter many nurses, doctors, engineers, teachers, and other professionals who would help fill in demand job positions in Oregon and be able to better contribute to the community and state as a whole. Without the support this bill gives, many of them will not have a chance to recognize their full potential and in turn, help Oregon realize its full potential.