

Friday, April 18, 2025

Dear Chair Boardman and Honorable members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee.

I am John Kingery from Beaverton, Oregon attending St Juan Diego Parish. I have 8 years serving our Immigrant and refugee communities as my parish's Social Justice Ministry immigration advocate and Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (IMRIJ).

I urge your support for SB 149: Support for Newcomers. The bill amends ORS 411.139, passed in 2019, to:

- 1 Expand the definition of organizations who qualify to provide services to Oregon's new neighbors experiencing high vulnerability and systemic barriers.
- 2 Broaden the definition of international refugee to include individuals who are pursuing immigration assistance and have been residing in this state for 24 months or less.

As the Joint Ways and Means Committee, you determine state budget policy. That is a fiscal responsibility. You and all citizens of Oregon and the United States have moral and legal responsibilities.

Fiscal

Immigrant Oregonians contribute \$33 billion annually to our state's economy, according to the OCPP. Immigrant and refugee family's strength and potential will contribute even more to our economy.

Moral:

Our nation's Declaration of Independence preamble states -

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, **that all men are created equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.*

Hebrew Scripture proclaims –

‘The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you;

Leviticus 19:34

‘Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow.’ Deuteronomy 27:19

New Testament

Jesus taught – ***‘I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.’***

Paul wrote – ***‘Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers...’***

This month, I met a woman and her family from Venezuela. Arriving via the CHNV humanitarian parole program. The federal program that will terminate April 24 and parole status will end.

Earlier, I was washing my car and could not remove my floor mats, Ishmael from Afghanistan helped me. He had entered through the Afghan resettlement program and Green card. Ishmael's brother has not. Those programs will end soon. Haven't they suffered enough?

Last Fall, my wife and I were attempting to walk down a very rocky and wet path in Lincoln city. My wife is blind, and I need a cane to steady myself. Two young people from Venezuela helped my wife and I get back from the beach.

They were all angels. I gave them information on low-cost legal services – Catholic Charities, Ecumenical ministries, and others.

All three stories above point out how they contribute to our communities and our Oregon in a positive manner.

Legal:

Our Constitution states in article 7 no one shall be - ***‘... deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law;’***

Our Bill of fifth amendment states no one shall be – ***‘be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.’***

The 14th amendment states – ***‘nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.’***

The federal government, by its terminating humanitarian refugee programs and their funding have failed in the moral, Civic and legal responsibilities.

The cost of an immigration lawyer in Oregon can vary widely, ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000 (or more) depending on the type of case and the scope of work. Hourly rates in Oregon typically range from \$159 to \$497, with an average of \$296.

Cuts in Federal funding will make it difficult if not impossible for local organizations and individuals to provide necessary compassionate legal and community support. I met the executive director Catholic Charities, IRCO at the Senate Judiciary Committee confirmed they this fact.

I respectfully urge you to recommend the passage of SB 149.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Marshall Kingery

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"We will be known by the difference we make in truth, love and unity through effective compassion and service to others."