

Dear House Committee on Housing and Human Services,

I strongly support HB 2508 requiring DHS to award grants to refugee resettlement agencies to provide services to refugees arriving in Oregon.

I am a member of St. Ignatius Catholic Church in Portland and I have seen the important work our Tibbetts House Refugee Ministry provides at St. Ignatius Church. Our volunteers work with Catholic Charities of Oregon to provide temporary housing for refugees who newly arrive to Oregon. I am aware that Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program struggles to continue to provide necessary services and case management to newly arriving refugees while federal funding for refugee services is cut.

With the housing crisis in Oregon, refugee resettlement agencies have a really hard time securing affordable housing for refugee families who hope to begin a new, safe life in our state. Our work at Tibbetts House is only temporary shelter and aculturation.

HB 2508 could provide the much needed longer-term relief to refugee resettlement organizations.

Please imagine if you and your desperate family had fled untenable violence in your distant home country and were seeking peace and a new life in America!

Sincerely,

Barbara Scharff

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