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March 11, 2019

To: Senate Education Committee
RE: Senate Bill 263

Chair Wagner and members of the committee:

My name is Carla Piluso and I proudly represent House District 50, the great city of Gresham.

Senate Bill 263 is a small change to who pays in-state tuition at our public universities. But that small change speaks to a big truth: when we set immigrants and refugees on the path to success, every Oregonian is better off.

The groups affected by this bill have faced enormous obstacles in their journey to the United States. Refugees have fled war, persecution, and violence, and have often spent years in overseas refugee camps. Special Immigrant Visa holders have faced threats in their home countries because of their work with American armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. And COFA islanders face unique barriers in the United States due to their status.

At the same time, we know that refugees and immigrants are incredibly resilient and make enormous contributions to our state—they go to college, hold jobs, and own businesses at similar or higher rates than citizens born on American soil.

I'm proud to live in a state that welcomes newcomers, and one of the best ways we can welcome newcomers is by breaking down the barriers that keep them from being successful.

This bill will impact a small number of people—but it will have a big impact on some of our newest neighbors, and it will show the world that Oregon has not shut its door. I urge you to support Senate Bill 263.

Sincerely,

Carla C. Piluso
Oregon State Representative, House District 50