

To the Joint Interim Committee on the Second Special Session of 2021

December 12th, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Sen. Lee Beyer
Committee Co-Chair (SD 6)
Sen.LeeBeyer@oregonlegislature.gov

Rep. Julie Fahey
Committee Co-Chair (HD 14)
Rep.JulieFahey@oregonlegislature.gov

Dear Co-Chair Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Fahey, and Members of the Joint Interim Committee On The Second Special Session of 2021:

As local elected officials and community leaders, we are writing to express our strong support for the Afghan Arrivals Support Package Proposal that was put forward by Representative Khanh Pham and Senator Kayse Jama to ensure that incoming Afghan families receive the support they need to secure housing and meet basic needs.

When the United States pulled out from Afghanistan and the Taliban seized power, we were proud to be in solidarity with Governor Brown and the Oregon Legislature to call for our federal government to do everything in their power to evacuate families who were in harm's way. Now that many families have been evacuated to U.S. military bases and have begun to arrive in Oregon, we must help them build a successful foundation for their lives as our neighbors, students, workers, and community members.

This humanitarian crisis unfolded after the legislature adjourned, and we have seen the many ways that community organizations, state agencies, and people across Oregon have stepped up to support. The legislature now has the power to approve this proposal to support these families in a strategic and targeted manner to meet the most immediate needs at the special session on Monday, December 13th. Through a collaborative process, the needs that are addressed in the proposal include emergency sheltering, housing assistance and coordination, legal services and case management, and culturally and linguistically appropriate support.

Refugees have created an enduring legacy in our communities in which they have come to call home. Cities and towns across the country have witnessed first-hand the positive impact that has come with welcoming refugees. This \$18 million dollar proposal will not only prevent families from falling through the cracks as they enroll their children in school, secure housing, adjust their legal status, and find employment, but will also be a strategic economic investment for our state.

For over 46 years, Oregon has been a warm and welcoming community to immigrants and refugees from all over the world. They have been resettling, revitalizing neighborhoods, opening businesses and contributing to the state's rich history, diversity, economy and culture. They have worked tirelessly to achieve full participation and integration in the social, economic, and political decisions that affect their lives, building stronger alliances across all communities and fields in Oregon. To date, more than 250 Afghan individuals have been resettled in Oregon. Oregon's resettlement partners have committed to welcoming 1,200 Afghan arrivals for our state to do our part to help resettle more than 40,000 Afghan individuals who are still located on U.S. military bases.

Oregon has always stepped up to welcome vulnerable and displaced families seeking refuge from violence and oppression, and ensure their smooth transition. This time is no different. We have an obligation to help those individuals and families who were there for us every step of the way as we made a commitment to protect them during our 20 year mission.

The time to make these emergency investments is now. The legislature must honor our commitment to being a welcoming state by providing adequate resources to support families who have arrived and more who are on the way. We thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, and we look forward to your support.

In Solidarity,

CITY AND COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

Allison Tivnon
Beaverton City Councilor

Ashley Hartmeier-Prigg
Beaverton City Councilor

Nadia Hasan
Beaverton City Councilor

Lacey Beaty
Beaverton Mayor

Anthony Broadman
Bend City Councilor

Gena Goodman-Campbell
Bend City Councilor

Megan Perkins
Bend City Councilor

Matt Keating
Eugene City Councilor

Peter Hall
Haines City Councilor

Daniel Nguyen
Lake Oswego City Councilor

Joe Buck
Lake Oswego Mayor

Sarah Spansail
Medford City Councilor

Jessica Vega Pederson
Multnomah County Commissioner

Sharon Meieran
Multnomah County Commissioner

Carmen Rubio
Portland City Commissioner

Dan Ryan
Portland City Commissioner

Jo Ann Hardesty
Portland City Commissioner

Mingus Mapps
Portland City Commissioner

Ted Wheeler
Portland Mayor

Tom Andersen
Salem City Councilor

Chuck Bennett
Salem Mayor

Eleanor Ponomareff
Talent City Council President

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Chrissy Erguiza
Democratic Party of Oregon
AAPI Caucus Chair

Ian Curtis
Democratic Party of Oregon
Young Dem Caucus Comm Chair

Jenny Kim
Korean American Coalition
Former National President

Christine Chin Ryan
National Organization for Women
Oregon President

Benjamin Wieser
Portland High School Democrats
Co-President

Shubhangi Bose
Portland High School Democrats
Co-President

Neil Lee
Portland Lee's Association
President

Chi Nguyen
Salem Area Mass Transit
District Director

M. Claire Howe
The Raven Corps
Executive Director

ORGANIZATIONS

Afghan Support Network

Asian and Pacific Islander Community Coalition of Oregon

Catholic Charities of Oregon

Catholic Community Services of Lane County

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization

Lutheran Community Services Northwest

Salem for Refugees