



Board Members

The Rev. J.W. Matt Hennessee
Chair

The Rev. Linda Jaramillo
Chair Elect

Joe Snyder
Immediate Past Chair

John Andrea
Treasurer

The Rev. Valerie Walker
Secretary

The Rev. Dr. Mark Brocker

The Rev. Vicky Brown

The Rev. Roberta Egli

The Rev. Don Frueh

The Rev. Michael Grogan

Melinda Gross

The Rev. Andrew Guthrie

The Rev. Dr. LeRoy Haynes, Jr.

The Rev. Mark Knutson

Glenna Kruger

The Very Rev. Nathan LeRud

The Rev. Margaret Marcuson

The Rev. Terry McCray Hill

The Rev. Nancy McGrath Green

Peter Sergienko

Julia Spence

Gary Withers

Letty Owings

The Rev. Dr. Rodney Page

Lifetime Members

Jan Musgrove Elfers

President

March 30, 2021

Senate Committee on Judiciary & Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
RE: SB 778, Office of Immigrant & Refugee Advancement

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and Members of the Committee,

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon urges your support for SB 778, which would elevate the needs of and celebrate those Oregonians who are immigrants and refugees. In EMO's role as both an advocacy organization that focuses on *Welcoming the Neighbor*¹ and as a service provider comprised of a staff who are themselves members of our immigrant and refugee communities, we encourage the establishment of an Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement.

Working with over 150 congregations, organizations, and interfaith partners, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) strives to envision communities of faith in partnership creating a more peaceful, just, sustainable, and compassionate world. EMO works with and for Oregonians through dialogue, advocacy, and direct service, including our SOAR Refugee Resettlement program, SOAR Immigration Legal Services and Russian Oregon Social Services (ROSS), a program where survivors of domestic and sexual violence who are Russian-speaking members of our community receive culturally responsive support.

The state of Oregon has welcomed nearly 70,000 refugees to our state since 1975. A refugee is someone who has fled one's home country and cannot return because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

Meanwhile, Oregonians are in need of high-quality legal services, including Oregonians who are frontline workers, DACAistas/Dreamers, asylum seekers, individuals who are in United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention and would-be citizens. One in seven essential workers is an immigrant, and Oregon's immigrants are 54 percent more likely to be essential workers than other Oregonians. Today, over 84,000 lawful permanent residents are eligible to apply for naturalization.

In solidarity with our community and our colleagues, we urge your support of SB 778.

Respectfully,

Britt Conroy
Public Policy Director
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

¹ Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, 2021-2022 Legislative Priorities <https://emoregon.org/advocacy-action/legislative-priorities/>.