

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, Members of the Committee:

**HB 3176** would direct The Department of Human Services, in consultation with the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement, to establish the Welcome and Reception Program for the purpose of providing immigrants and refugees with specified services.

I personally know that other developed countries provide welcome and relocation services to asylum seekers and immigrants. My daughter and family have lived in Brussels, Belgium for many years. Belgium has welcomed refugees from Syria, Africa and more recently Ukraine in great numbers. On visits, I have seen government-provided food stations and have met immigrants and refugees who, after going to one government office, get housing vouchers and job assistance. They soon become productive citizens of their new country.

New arrivals are some of the most vulnerable, underserved and marginalized people in Oregon. Many arrive in our communities after harrowing journeys with no housing, no one they know, and in need of the most basic support and services -- housing, food, and jobs. Services offered by the federal or state systems are wholly inadequate.

Community based organizations, as well as some faith communities support immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers with their limited resources. The needs far outstrip the existing capacity to provide essential services.

A state funded Welcome and Reception program would be an important step toward the goal of building a system that will support new members of our community and facilitate their integration and full participation. While community based organizations do what they can to address this need, state funding and oversight are essential to assuring the basic needs of all new arrivals are met now and in the future.

**I urge you to support HB 3176.**

Sincerely,  
Katherine Foldes, J.D. and first generation American

