

Submitter: Peter Newbegin

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB3176

Good afternoon Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Nguyen, Vice Chair Scharf, members of the committee. For the record, my name is Peter Newbegin, Executive Director of Portland Refugee Support Group.

PRSG provides support to those seeking safety in our community. We are not part of the federally funded resettlement program, We are a community-based organization, and we provide holistic, trauma responsive services beyond what is available through our partners at resettlement agencies.

Whether it's basic needs like food and shelter, or an application to grad school and career pathways, we are on the ground every day rebuilding lives here in Oregon.

As part of our mission, we have had the privilege of working together with our partners to support the humanitarian response to the arrival of asylum seekers, who, until they were welcomed here, had literally no other place on earth to call home.

I'm here today in support of HB 3176, which would create a comprehensive service package for a community who has been determined through federal policy to be ineligible for services funded by the federal government.

This bill represents an opportunity to continue our proud legacy of welcoming those fleeing persecution by strengthening the capacity of organizations like PRSG to provide vital navigation and resource support.

Seeking asylum is a human right, enshrined in both international law and US code. The people supported through this mission have followed the law in their quest for safety, and our humanity compels us to respond with kindness and empathy.

I have been doing this work for almost 20 years. I know that, when we work together as a community to invest in a strong foundation of support, the social dividends we see returned are breathtaking and inspirational.

I ask that you continue this body's legacy of leadership in holding Oregon up as a shining example of our highest values by passing HB 3176.