



State Senator Kayse Jama

Senate District 24 (D-East Portland)

Native land of Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other tribes that made their homes along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers

PRESS RELEASE

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Oregon Senate Approves Expansion of In-State Tuition Eligibility For Afghan Refugees

Senate Bill 1522 is the omnibus education bill and makes various changes to statutes and appropriates General Fund dollars.

SALEM, Oregon - Today the Oregon Senate approved Senate Bill 1522 on a vote of 22 to 4. Included in this bill is the expansion of the eligibility for in-state college tuition to include those arriving from Afghanistan. In 2021, the Oregon legislature passed Senate Bill 553, which provides that students from Compact of Free Association (COFA) island nations, refugees, and special immigrant visa holders be eligible for exemption from nonresident tuition and fees at public universities, and are eligible to receive state and university scholarships or other financial aid. Those arriving from Afghanistan as conditional permanent residents or humanitarian parolees, and those who are under asylum or temporary protected status are currently not covered under Senate Bill 553.

“When Representative Pham and I convened a workgroup in 2021 to welcome and support our Afghan arrivals, one policy recommendation was to expand the list of eligible individuals in SB 533 to include Afghan refugees and those with humanitarian parole, asylum, conditional permanent residency, or temporary protected status,” said Senator Kayse Jama (D-Portland), “I appreciate Senator Dembrow for his leadership to make this happen. This bill will make Oregon’s higher education opportunities accessible to Afghans trying to rebuild their lives.”

Senate Bill 1522 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

About State Senator Kayse Jama: Senator Jama represents Senate District 24 (East Portland and North Clackamas) and serves as the chair of the Senate Committee On Housing and Development, and the Legislature’s Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Caucus. He was the first former refugee, Muslim, and Somali-American to serve in the Oregon State Senate. Before his appointment, Sen. Jama was a prominent community organizer and Executive Director of Unite Oregon.