



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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House Votes to Establish Office of Immigrant & Refugee Advancement

SB 778 establishes the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement within the Office of the Governor to advocate for and partner with statewide immigrant and refugee programs and long-term support services to meet the needs of immigrant and refugee populations in Oregon

SALEM, OR - Today the House passed [SB 778](#), which appropriates \$1.3 million dollars to the Office for the purpose of employing four staff members for the newly created Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement. The Office will also be responsible for collecting data on immigrant and refugee populations in Oregon to determine needs and track progress in reducing social, economic, and health disparities for refugees and immigrant populations.

“As the daughter of refugees and someone who has worked with refugee populations, this bill is incredibly personal and meaningful to me because I see my own family’s story in this legislation, and I believe this bill speaks to both the promise and pain of settling in the United States,” said [Rep. Khanh Pham](#) (D-Portland), co-Chief sponsor of the bill.

The benefits of inclusive policies are particularly strong in Oregon, where immigrants are deeply integrated into state and local communities. Ten percent of Oregon residents – nearly 400,000 Oregonians – are immigrants. One in eight Oregon residents is a US citizen with at least one immigrant parent, and one in twelve Oregon children is a US citizen with at least one undocumented parent. One in eight workers in the state is an immigrant or refugee.

“This bill is more than funding an office, this is part of a story of who we are as a State and what we stand for. It is our commitment as a legislature for people to grow up without fear of being foreign, of being different, of being ‘other’. I think it is important to mark this moment in the story of Oregon, a story of a Muslim Somali former refugee (Sen. Kayse Jama) in the Senate and a daughter of Vietnamese refugees in the House, both the first of their kind, carrying a bill that creates an agency that serves people like our families, amidst a year that has seen hate increase in our community and attacks on the very foundation of this Capitol of Democracy,” said Rep. Khanh Pham.

SB 778 passed 50-6 with bipartisan support and now heads to the Governor's Desk.

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