



August 17, 2021

The Honorable Governor Kate Brown,
Governor of Oregon
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Kate Brown:

As Oregon state legislators, many with ties to refugee communities, we are compelled to speak out after seeing the chaotic scenes in Kabul this weekend. We join together to affirm that Afghan families are welcome in Oregon.

We are calling for the safe passage for people from Afghanistan who are facing immediate threats to their lives and the lives of their families. What we are facing now is a humanitarian crisis, and we must meet this moment with the urgency it demands.

Together, we call on the Biden administration to lift the refugee admission caps and take other emergency humanitarian actions that will save lives at this pivotal time. As a state, we must also take all the necessary steps to be prepared to resettle families when they arrive.

Events in Afghanistan echo the departure of the United States from Saigon following the end of the Vietnam War. In 1975, the United States lifted refugee caps to allow more than 125,000 families to resettle in communities across the country.

Since then, the United States has admitted more than three million refugees who have resettled in this country. Though refugees and immigrants have faced and continue to face significant barriers, they continue to demonstrate their dedication to serving the public and they add immense value to our communities. They are students, small business owners, neighbors, and community leaders. They are our friends and family.

As Oregonians, we welcome vulnerable and displaced families seeking refuge from violence and oppression. We know that in the current context women, children, and LGBTQ+ people--as well as those that work on their behalf--are under immediate threat of violence and death. As the Taliban claims more territory across the country, the danger that Afghan refugees face grows every day, especially for those who risked their lives to support American troops and for human rights and gender equality advocates.

In the 2021 Legislative Session, the Oregon Legislature took an important step forward when we passed [Senate Bill 778](#) with broad bipartisan support to provide long-term support services



to meet the needs of immigrant and refugee populations. It reflects what we hope our Oregon values to be when we look out for our neighbors and stand up for justice.

We know that you share the same commitment to these values, and we are ready to partner with you and your offices in making it clear that Oregon welcomes families fleeing violence. As leaders, it is our duty to act swiftly and with urgency to save lives, place humanity above all, and ensure that Afghan refugees are safely evacuated to welcoming communities.

Sincerely,

Representative Khanh Pham, HD 46

Senator Kayse Jama, SD 24

Oregon State Representatives

Speaker Tina Kotek, HD 44
Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner, HD 45
Rep. Pam Marsh, HD 5
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Rep. Marty Wilde, HD 11
Rep. John Lively, HD 12
Rep. Nancy Nathanson, HD 13
Rep. Julie Fahey, HD 14
Rep. Dan Rayfield, HD 16
Rep. Paul Evans, HD 20
Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon, HD 22
Rep. Courtney Neron, HD 26
Rep. Winsvey Campos, HD 28
Rep. Susan McLain, HD 29
Rep. Brad Witt, HD 31
Rep. Maxine Dexter, HD 33
Rep. Ken Helm, HD 34
Rep. Dacia Grayber, HD 35
Rep. Lisa Reynolds, HD 36
Rep. Rachel Prusak, HD 37
Rep. Andrea Salinas, HD 38
Rep. Mark Meek, HD 40
Rep. Karin Power, HD 41
Rep. Rob Nosse, HD 42
Rep. Tawna Sanchez, HD 43

Rep. Andrea Valderrama, HD 47
Rep. Jeff Reardon, HD 48
Rep. Zach Hudson, HD 49
Rep. Ricki Ruiz, HD 50
Rep. Janelle Bynum, HD 51
Rep. Anna Williams, HD 52

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Majority Leader Rob Wagner, SD 19
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Sen. Lee Beyer, SD 6
Sen. James Manning Jr., SD 7
Sen. Sara Gelser Blouin, SD 8
Sen. Deb Patterson, SD 10
Sen. Kate Lieber, SD 14
Sen. Chuck Riley, SD 15
Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, SD 17
Sen. Ginny Burdick, SD 18
Se. Kathleen Taylor, SD 21
Sen. Lew Frederick, SD 22
Sen. Michael Dembrow, SD 23
Sen. Chris Gorsek, SD 25
Sen. Tim Knopp, SD 27
Sen. Bill Hansell, SD 29