



State Senator
TINA MAHARATH

3rd District

Sponsor Testimony
Senate Concurrent Resolution 6
Government Oversight and Reform Committee
Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution 6, a resolution to commend refugee communities in Ohio.

A refugee is someone outside their own country of origin who cannot return to their home due to threats of persecution, violence or both. Since its founding, America has served as a beacon of hope and opportunity for those seeking refuge from persecution. Refugees have had a hand in building this country since its founding, and continue to do so today. In recent years, Ohio has served as a leading destination for refugee resettlement. In 2019 Ohio welcomed over 1,400 refugees.¹

As the daughter of refugees from Laos, I have experienced firsthand what refugees undergo in America. Refugees often arrive having experienced significant hardship in their country of origin, speaking little to no English and with little but the clothes on their backs. In spite of these difficulties, these individuals come to Ohio to work hard and provide a better life for themselves and their families.

Ohio is home to a diverse population of refugees and immigrants who have enhanced the economic vitality and cultural richness of our state. Independent research conducted on behalf of the Refugee Services Collaborative of Greater Cleveland estimated that in 2016, refugees generated a total economic impact of \$82.2 million in spending in the Cleveland area alone.

¹ <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2019/10/08/ohio-kentucky-top-states-refugee-admissions-resettlement/3907528002/>



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Refugees enrich Ohio's culture and contribute to our economy despite facing great hurdles, and it for these reasons and more that they deserve to be commended. Chair Roegner and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee, I appreciate your attention to this issue and I respectfully request your favorable consideration and passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 6. Thank you and I am happy to respond to questions from the committee.