

Testimony Against HB 1706:

“AN ACT repealing the refugee resettlement program in the department of health and human services and prohibiting expenditure of state funds on refugee resettlement.”

Rep. Timothy Horrigan (Strafford 10); February 24, 2026

House Health & Human Services Committee

Basically, everyone here in New Hampshire (and in the United States as a whole) is either an immigrant of one sort or another, or a descendant of immigrants.

The only exception would be the relatively small number of New Hampshire residents who are members of the Abenaki nation. They are virtually all of mixed ancestry, since the Abenakis have intermarried with every other ethnic group who have migrated to the land originally known as N'Dakinna during the last several centuries. And even the Abenaki have only been in New Hampshire for about 12,000 years, which is a long time, but not forever. Their ancestors came here from somewhere else, just like everyone else's ancestors.

Some of our ancestors came to America voluntarily, and some of our ancestors were slaves, but many of our ancestors were refugees.

Ironically, one of the sponsors of this bill is himself an immigrant. Some others are members of the Free State Project, who are U.S. citizens who somewhat hyperbolically view themselves as refugees from high taxes, “political correctness,” and “statism” in other states. Free State Project movers are of course, not really refugees or asylees. They were not persecuted in their previous home states, and they can go back anytime they want with no problem.

This bill would ban New Hampshire from welcoming individuals who are unable or unwilling to return to their home country due to persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Excluding those people is not just inhumane: it's also foolish. The typical individual who goes to the trouble of seeking refugee status in the United States is generally much smarter, much more courageous, and much more motivated than the average person in their home country— as well as the average person in this country. Many refugees end up becoming citizens of the USA. They make our state and our country stronger.