



Building Community in New Hampshire

1045 Elm St., Suite 202, Manchester NH 03101
www.bcinnh.org bcnh@bcinnh.org 603.935.9620

February 24, 2026

Testimony in opposition of HB 1706

Dear Chair Wayne MacDonald, Members of the Committee,

My name is Nicole Shults, I am the Executive Director of Building Community in New Hampshire, and I am speaking today in opposition to HB 1706.

If this bill becomes law, it would close the New Hampshire Refugee Program and cancel more than \$4 million in federal funding that currently supports refugee resettlement services in our state.

It is important to be clear: the Refugee Program office is fully funded by the federal government — not by New Hampshire taxpayers. This bill would not save the state money. Instead, it would require New Hampshire to turn down millions of federal dollars that are already allocated to support lawful refugees during their first five years in the United States.

If HB 1706 passes, the state would stop managing these federal funds and cancel contracts with nonprofit agencies that provide essential services. One of those organizations is Building Community in New Hampshire. We know firsthand how critical both the coordination with the state office and the funding are to our ability to do this work effectively.

These funds support services for refugees who have lawful status — individuals and families who have already gone through extensive federal vetting processes. The support we provide through this program includes workforce development, English language classes, job placement, school supports and health access support. These services help refugees establish successful lives in the United States and reach economic independence and integration into their new communities.

It is also important to clarify what this funding does not do. The federal funding targeted by HB 1706 does not provide direct cash payments or housing subsidies to refugees. It helps organizations like ours cover staff salaries and operational costs so that we can provide structured, time-limited support that leads to self-sufficiency.

If HB 1706 passes, New Hampshire will voluntarily turn down more than \$4 million in federal funds. The need in our communities will not disappear — but the infrastructure that supports successful integration will. The likely result will not be savings, but greater strain on local communities, employers, schools, and social services.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote no on HB 1706.



Building Community in New Hampshire

1045 Elm St., Suite 202, Manchester NH 03101
www.bcinnh.org bcnh@bcinnh.org 603.935.9620

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Nicole Shults
Executive Director