

Congressional Letter to Governors and State/Local Officials

[DATE]

[TITLE & NAME] (Find governors, state legislators, mayor & local officials: www.usa.gov/elected-officials)
[ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE]

Dear [TITLE & LAST NAME]:

As [MEMBER OF CONGRESS] from [CITY, STATE], I urge you to welcome refugees, support the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, and deliver written consent to the administration that our [CITY/COUNTY/STATE] welcomes refugees. Resettlement is a strong American legacy that extends hospitality and offers a chance for refugees to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity. Every day, more community members than ever before are volunteering with resettlement offices around the country to help refugees integrate and thrive.

On September 26, the White House issued an [Executive Order](#) (EO 13888) that may drastically reduce, if not entirely stop, the resettlement of refugees in our community. Due to this EO, starting on December 25, 2019, refugees will not be permitted to resettle to a state or locality unless written consent is provided by the governor and a local official. If a governor does not consent, refugees will not be permitted to resettle in that state. If a governor consents but a mayor does not, refugees will not be permitted to resettle in that locality. Failure to provide consent from either the governor or local officials will result in a severe disruption to the lives of refugees and their families and threaten the stability of the resettlement program.

We are deeply concerned that this executive order will prolong family separation for refugee families, create chaos and confusion about where refugees can be resettled, and leave refugees, former refugees, and United States citizens without supportive services. The administration has also [proposed a refugee admissions goal](#) of 18,000 refugees for this year, a shamefully abysmal number for the world's most powerful nation and in stark contrast to the historic average goal of 95,000 refugees.

Our [CITY/COUNTY/STATE] welcomes refugees and is home to a diverse population of refugees and immigrants, adding to its economic strength and cultural richness. We have been an example of a hospitable and welcoming place for newcomers, where the contributions of all are celebrated and valued. Refugees are resilient, hard workers and valued members of our community. They contribute to our state's economy as workers and entrepreneurs, paying taxes, starting businesses, revitalizing towns, and buying homes. *[Add [state specific information about refugees](#), refugees' positive contributions to your state and/or ways that communities welcome refugees].*

Since 1980, the U.S. has set an average annual refugee admissions goal of 95,000. In 2019, that goal was 30,000, the lowest in the history of the U.S. resettlement program. This [reduction](#) has already negatively impacted refugees in our state who are awaiting family reunification, people of faith and other volunteers who are dedicated to welcoming refugees, and businesses across our state that employ refugees.

The United States has a long history of resettling refugees, who by definition have fled persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group. Resettlement is the last option for safety for refugees who cannot return home and cannot rebuild their lives in a nearby country. Refugees undergo rigorous security checks, including interviews with Department of Homeland Security officers. The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program is a public-private partnership between the federal government, state governments, local non-profit organizations, communities of faith, and volunteers.

Refugee resettlement is important to our state. I urge you to affirm the importance of this life-saving program, provide the written consent to the administration that [CITY/COUNTY/STATE] will continue to

welcome refugees, and urge the administration to return the program to historic norms. Thank you for your public service and attention to this matter.

With appreciation,

[YOUR SIGNATURE AND CONTACT INFORMATION]