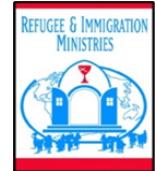




Disciples Home Missions and Refugee & Immigration Ministries

Letter in Support of Refugee Protection & Resettlement on the Occasion of World Refugee Day 2018



Dear Distinguished Members of Congress,

June 15, 2018

As a faith movement born on the American frontier and deeply committed to the principle that all are welcome at the Table of Christ, Disciples remain determined to fulfill our biblical call to show hospitality to the stranger and to treat “the foreigner who resides with you...as the native born among you” (Leviticus 19:34). In the decades since World War II, our churches have sponsored tens of thousands of refugees, and been inspired by what our partnerships with refugees have offered to the spiritual life of our church communities, and to the economic health and cultural vitality of our neighborhoods. Our observance of the values of independence, initiative, courage, and determination displayed by refugees led us to re-affirm our commitment to refugees last year through the [“Ecumenical Declaration: Protecting Welcome, Restoring Hope”](#), and also to pass a [refugee emergency resolution](#) at our last summer’s General Assembly, expressing concerns about adverse effects upon refugees and refugee agencies caused by Executive Order 13780.

We write this letter as many of our congregations prepare on this weekend to celebrate our [“Refugee and Immigrant Welcome Sunday”](#), always honored near World Refugee Day, where churches will listen to, pray for, and further strengthen relationships they have with refugees and immigrants in their communities. Among the many [stories](#) to be shared on this day will be how our Beargrass Christian Church has provided over 3,000 bicycles to refugees through their [“Pedal Power Project”](#) in the Louisville area since 2013! Our churches likewise will honor World Refugee Day in weeks ahead through celebrations and partnerships with refugee resettlement organizations in their area.

From the first family of refugees resettled by our churches until now, we continue to stand with refugees to offer protection from conditions of brutal violence that have pushed families to flee their home countries. We remain exceptionally concerned with the lower-than-ever ceiling of only 45,000 refugees determined by the President in this fiscal year. We are deeply distressed that [only 13,785 refugees](#) had arrived into the U.S. by the end of May; meaning we are on track to receive far less than one-half of the low ceiling of 45,000 refugees. For America’s doors to be closing to refugees at the very time the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has [reported](#) the highest global numbers of refugees in decades is unconscionable.

Therefore, we urge Congress to ensure the United States continues to play significant roles in generously offering welcome and compassion through the public-private partnership of refugee resettlement. Specifically, we request your support for a Presidential Determination of at least 75,000 refugees for 2019. Our churches are ready to work in partnership with resettlement agencies to welcome refugees through resettlement. We likewise urge robust funding for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, so it may keep aiding refugees to gain self-sufficiency quickly upon arrival, and help them continue to become employed at rates of 85% within their first 180 days of entrance. At the same time, we call upon your leadership to maintain strong international assistance for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons—recognizing that less than 1% of the world’s refugees are ever resettled to a third country. Finally, we compel you to resist support for any legislation that threatens to dismantle support for the U.S. refugee resettlement process.

Amidst global violence, we are grateful for a U.S. refugee vetting process that is strong, careful, and unmatched around the world. Because of it, we are thankful that refugees can be considered the most heavily vetted of any individuals who enter our nation. As we know refugees are likewise among the most vulnerable in the world, we thank you for your ongoing leadership that can continue to demonstrate how America can be both safe and compassionate without discrimination. For, as our sacred scriptures remind us, we must “not forget to show hospitality to strangers; for by doing so, some have entertained angels unawares.” (Heb. 13:2).

With prayers for your leadership,

Sotello V. Long

Rev. Sotello Long, President,
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Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea

Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director
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