# National and Local Organizations Support the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program and Oppose Legislation that Would Stop the Resettlement of Syrian Refugees

January 15, 2016

#### Dear Senator:

As refugee and immigration law experts, humanitarian aid organizations, faith, labor and civil and human rights groups, we write to express our support for the U.S. refugee resettlement program and opposition to legislation that would stop, pause or defund the resettlement of Syrian refugees. We urge you to oppose the American Security against Foreign Enemies (SAFE) Act of 2015 (H.R. 4038). The world is witnessing the largest refugee crisis since World War II. More than 4 million Syrians have fled from their home country fleeing conflict and violence, and 6.5 million are displaced internally.

At a time when the world needs humanitarian leadership, some are now calling for the suspension of the U.S. refugee resettlement program or the imposition of restrictions on funding for Syrians and other groups of refugees. We oppose these proposals and believe they would jeopardize the United States' moral leadership in the world.

Syrian refugees are fleeing exactly the kind of terror that unfolded on the streets of Paris. They have suffered violence just like this for almost five years. Most have lost loved ones to persecution and violence, in addition to having had their country, their community, and everything they own brutally taken from them.

Refugees are the most thoroughly vetted group of people who come to the United States. Security screenings are rigorous and involve the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the Department of Defense and multiple intelligence agencies. Department of Homeland Security officials interview each refugee to determine whether they meet the refugee definition and whether they are admissible to the United States. Refugees undergo a series of biometric and investigatory background checks, including collection and analysis of personal data, fingerprints, photographs, and other background information, all of which is checked against government databases. The entire process typically takes more than two years and often much more before the refugee would arrive in the U.S. In addition the Administration is already taking steps, with its existing authority, to increase the capacity of its security and screening procedures for refugees. There is no need for Congress to impose additional restrictions or security measures.

The United States decides which refugees to resettle. Because so few refugees in the world are resettled, the U.S. often chooses the most vulnerable, including refugees who cannot remain safely where they are and families with children who cannot receive the medical care they need to survive.

To turn our back on refugees would be to betray our nation's core values. It would send a demoralizing and dangerous message to the world that the United States makes judgments about people based on the country they come from and their religion. This feeds into extremist

propaganda and makes us all less safe. We call upon Congress to demonstrate leadership by speaking out against the scapegoating of any group during this time of crisis and to ensure that our nation's humanitarian efforts are robust

The United States is a welcoming country with a diverse society and our resettlement program must continue to reflect this.

We can welcome refugees while ensuring our own security. Refugees have enriched communities across our country and have been part of the American fabric for generations. Historically our nation has responded to every major war or conflict and has resettled refugees from Africa, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe as well as the Middle East. Closing the door to refugees would be disastrous for not only the refugees themselves, but their family members in the United States who are waiting for them to arrive, and our reputation in the world.

Sincerely,

# **National Organizations**

**Adrian Dominican Sisters** 

The Advocates for Human Rights

Alliance for a Just Society

Alliance for Citizenship

Alliance of Baptists

Ameinu (Our People)

America's Voice Education Fund

American Civil Liberties Union

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)

American Hindu World Service (AHWS)

American Immigration Lawyers Association

American Jewish Committee (AJC)

American Refugee Committee

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

America's Voice Education Fund

Anti-Defamation League

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice-AAJC

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA)

Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence

Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies

Asylum Access

**Auburn Theological Seminary** 

Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America

**Bethany Christian Services** 

CARE USA

Catholic Charities USA

Center for Applied Linguistics

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

Center for Justice and Accountability

Center for New Community

Center for Victims of Torture

Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Refugee & Immigration Ministries

The Christian Reformed Church in North America

The Church of the Brethren

Church World Service

**CODEPINK:** Women for Peace

Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

Columbia Law School Immigrants' Rights Clinic

Community of Sant'Egidio USA

Concern Worldwide (US) Inc.

Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Congregation of St. Joseph

Council on American-Islamic Relations

Courage Campaign

Dominican Sisters of Hope

The Episcopal Church

Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding

Faiths for Safe Water

Farmworker Justice

Food for the Hungry

Franciscan Action Network

Franciscan Federation of the Third Order Regular Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis

Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Gamaliel

GLAD Alliance

Habonim Dror North America

Handicap International

HealthRight International

HIAS

Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, JPIC - USA

**Human Rights First** 

Ignatian Solidarity Network

InterAction

**International Catholic Migration Commission** 

International Refugee Assistance Project

International Rescue Committee

Iraqi Christians Advocacy and Empowerment Institute (ICAE)

J Street

Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States

Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, National Advocacy Office

Jesuit Refugee Service/USA

Jesuits Midwest

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Jewish Labor Committee

Just Foreign Policy

Justice for Our Neighbors

Jewish Women International

Kids In Need of Defense (KIND)

Ladies of Charity of the United States of America

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of North America

League of United Latin American Citizens

Little Sisters of the Assumption

Little Sisters of the Assumption Family in Mission

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

**MECCA** Institute

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

Mercy-USA for Aid and Development

Mi Familia Vota

Muslim Public Affairs Council

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association

National Center for Lesbian Rights

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP)

National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)

National Council of Churches, USA

National Council of Jewish Women

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)

National Domestic Workers Alliance

National Education Association

National Employment Law Project

National Immigrant Justice Center

National Immigration Forum

National Immigration Law Center

National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild

National Korean American Service and Education Consortium

National Network for Arab American Communities

National Network to End Domestic Violence

National People's Action

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Niswa Association, Incorporated

OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates

Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity, Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth

ORAM – Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration

Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters

Oxfam America

Partnership for Global Justice

Partnerships for Trauma Recovery

Peace Action West

People for the American Way

Positive American-Islamic Relations

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Refugee Solidarity Network

Refugees International

RefugePoint

Relief International

Religious of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ)

Save the Children

Scalabrini International Migration Network - SIMN

School Sisters of Notre Dame

School Sisters of Notre Dame AM Province JPIC Office

School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill

Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Institute Leadership Team

Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross

Sisters of Mercy, New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community

Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity

Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace Leadership Team Sisters of the Holy Family

Society of the Sacred Heart, United States-Canada Province

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

Southern Border Communities Coalition

Southern Poverty Law Center

Spanish Education for Women

St. Mary di Rosa Academies

STAND: The Student-Led Movement to End Mass Atrocities

SustainUS: U.S. Youth for Justice

**Swasia Charity Foundation** 

Syria Relief and Development

Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Tahirih Justice Center

**UNANIMA** International

Union for Reform Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Association

United Church of Christ

United Farm Workers

United for a Free Syria (UFS)

United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society

United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

United to End Genocide

United We Dream

Universal Muslim Association of America

Uri L'Tzedek: Orthodox Social Justice

USA Northeast Province of the Society of Jesus

**USAction** 

UU College of Social Justice

UURISE – Unitarian Universalist Refugee and Immigrant Services and Education, Inc.

Voices for Progress

Voto Latino

We Belong Together

Welcoming America

William M. & Miriam F. Meehan Foundation

Win Without War

Women of Reform Judaism

Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

Women's Refugee Commission

Workmen's Circle

World Relief

World Renew

YWCA USA

#### Alaska

Catholic Social Services

## Arizona

International Rescue Committee - Glendale

International Rescue Committee - Tucson

Refugee Focus- A Division of Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest

# **Arkansas**

Arkansas Interfaith Alliance

## California

Alliance for African Assistance

Armenian Relief Society of Western USA, Social Services

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles

Asian Americans for Community Involvement

Asian Law Alliance

Behavioral Health Board of Santa Clara County

Catholic Charities / First 5 Family Resource Center

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County - Refugee Foster Care

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa

Catholic Diocese of San Jose

Center for Employment Training Immigration and Citizenship Program

CLUE: Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)

Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST)

Community Lawyers Inc

Community Health for Asian Americans

Diversity in Health Training Institute

Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles

factr - Family Alliance for Counseling Tools and Resolution

First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, UCC

Friends of Friendship Park

Home-Start, Inc.

Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service

International Institute of L.A.

International Institute of the Bay Area

International Rescue Committee – Los Angeles

International Rescue Committee - Northern California

International Rescue Committee – San Diego

Japanese American Citizens League - Silicon Valley Chapter

Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay

Jewish Family Service of San Diego

Karen Organization of San Diego

Korean Resource Center

La Maestra Community Health Centers

Leichtag Foundation

MAIZ Movimiento de Accion Inspirando Servicio

North County Immigration Task Force

Northwest Forest Worker Center

Oakland Unified School District Refugee & Asylee Program

Opening Doors, Inc.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish

Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment

Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans

Pilgrim United Church of Christ

**Program for Torture Victims** 

Refugee Forum of Orange County

**Refugee Transitions** 

SDS Hope House

San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium

Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)

Somali Family Service of San Diego

Somos Mayfair

Spark Church

Survivors of Torture, International

UURISE - Unitarian Universalist Refugee & Immigrant Services & Education

World Relief Garden Grove

# **Colorado**

Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition

ECDC/African Community Center

# **Connecticut**

Connecticut Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame USA Peace and Justice Office

International Institute of Connecticut

Iris - Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services

Jewish Community Relations Council of New Haven

Khmer Health Advocates

Noank Baptist Church

Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry of the Archdiocese of Hartford

Wilton Interfaith Action Committee

# **Florida**

Catholic Charities of Central Florida

Catholic Charities Bureau Inc.

Catholic Charities Diocese of Palm Beach

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami

Coptic Orthodox Charities, Inc.

Church World Service - Palm Beach

Church World Service - South Florida

Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services

International Rescue Committee - Miami

Metropolitan Community Churches

Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida, Inc.

World Relief Jacksonville

Youth Co-Op, Inc.

# Georgia

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Atlanta

Catholic Charities of South Georgia

Friends of Refugees, Inc.

The International Rescue Committee – Atlanta

Lutheran Services of Georgia

# Idaho

Agency for New Americans Global Community Partners Holy Trinity Anglican Church International Rescue Committee - Boise Oasis SDA Church United Vision for Idaho

# Illinois

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center Korean American Resource and Cultural Center Syrian Community Network Women in Search of Peace

## Indiana

Exodus Refugee Immigration Inc.

# <u>Iowa</u>

Catholic Charities - Des Moines Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Davenport Central Plains Mennonite Conference Crossing Borders - Dubuque EMBARC Franciscan Peace Center

#### Kansas

Episcopal Migration Ministries Wichita
HealthCore Clinic, Inc.
International Rescue Committee – Wichita
Peace Committee of the Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church
St. John's Episcopal Church
Zion Mennonite Church

## Kentucky

Americana Community Center Catholic Charities of Louisville International Center of Kentucky Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Lexington Sarah's Place Women's Resource Center, Inc.

## Maine

Maine Sister of Mercy Justice Committee

# **Maryland**

American Hindu World Service Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus St Camillus Catholic Church

## Massachusetts

Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston

Catholic Charities Diocese of Springfield

Community Legal Services and Counseling Center

The First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain

International Institute of New England

Jewish Alliance for Law & Social Action

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston

Jewish Family Service of Metrowest

Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts

JVS, Greater Boston

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)

# **Michigan**

American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (Michigan Regional Office)

Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services (ACCESS)

Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan

**Christ Community Church** 

Dominican Sisters - Grand Rapids

Foundation for Justice and Development (FJD)

Lutheran Social Services of Michigan

Michigan Immigrant Rights Center

Michigan Migrant Legal Assistance Project, Inc.

Michigan Muslim Community Council

The Muslim Unity Center

Sisters, Home Visitors of Mary

Syrian American Rescue Network (SARN)

University of Michigan International Policy Student Association

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants – Detroit

## Minnesota

Faith Mennonite Church Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota Jewish Community Action

#### Missouri

Center for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma City of St. Louis Mental Health Board International Institute of St. Louis Jewish Vocational Service Mercy Professional Services

#### Saint Louis Mental Health Board

# Nebraska

Justice for Our Neighbors – Nebraska Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Inc. Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest Notre Dame Sisters Omaha Leadership Schlegel Center for Service and Justice at Creighton University Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community

# Nevada

Life, Peace & Justice Commission, Diocese of Reno Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

# New Jersey

SMILE for Charity

# New Mexico

Global Faith and Justice Project New Mexico Immigrant Law Center

# New York

Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social Justice

African Services Committee, Inc.

American Baptist Churches Rochester Genesee Region

The Arab American Association of NY

Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture

Blauvelt Dominican Sisters

**Buffalo Diocese Care for Creation Committee** 

Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC

Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany

Catholic Family Center

Citizen Action of New York

Dominican Sisters in Committed Collaboration

Dominican Sisters of Sparkill

Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition

Greater Rochester Coalition for Immigration Justice

International Institute of Buffalo

Jewish Family Service of Buffalo and Erie County

Jews for Racial & Economic Justice

Journey's End Refugee Services, Inc.

Kids for College

Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service

Long Island Wins

Make the Road New York

MinKwon Center for Community Action

New York Immigration Coalition

The Riverside Church

Sisters of Charity of New York

Sisters of Social Service of Buffalo

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany Province Justice Committee

St. Raphael PSM

The Interfaith Center of New York

Wayne Action for Racial Equality

# North Carolina

The Art Therapy Institute

Carolina Refugee Resettlement Agency, Inc.

Church World Service - Durham

Church World Service - Greensboro, Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Program

Interfaith Refugee Ministry

Interfaith Refugee Ministry - Wilmington

The Neighborhood Good Samaritan's Center, Inc.

NC African Services Coalition

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants - North Carolina Field Office

# Northern Mariana Islands

Karidat

# Ohio

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio

Catholic Social Services - Columbus

Community Refugee & Immigration Services

Congregation of St. Joseph

Congregation of St. Joseph Peace and Justice Team

International Institute of Akron

International Services Center of Cleveland

ProgressOhio

**SC** Ministry Foundation

US Together, Inc.

## Oregon

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon/Sponsors Organized To Assist Refugees

Oregon Action

Oregon Center for Christian Voices

SEIU Local 49

SEIU Local 503

**Unidos Bridging Community** 

## Pennsylvania

Advocacy for Justice and Peace Committee of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

**AJAPO** 

Casa de la Cultura

Casa San Jose

Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Services

Catholic Charities Immigration and Refugee Services of Harrisburg

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg

Church World Service - Lancaster

Congregation Kol Ami

Franciscan Sisters of Allegany

HIAS Pennsylvania

Immigration Taskforce, Southwestern PA Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Jewish Family & Children's Service of Pittsburgh

JSPAN, Jewish Social Policy Action Network

Justice and Peace Committee of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

**Keystone Progress** 

Nationalities Service Center

New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia

Northern Area Multi Service Center

Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition

SEAMAAC, Inc. (Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition, Inc.)

Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians

# Rhode Island

Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence Immigration & Refugee Service

#### Tennessee

Bridge Refugee Services, Inc. - Chattanooga

Bridge Refugee Services, Inc. - Knoxville

Catholic Charities of Tennessee

Nashville International Center for Empowerment

Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition

# **Texas**

**Amistad Houston** 

Caritas of Austin

Catholic Charities of Dallas

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

International Rescue Committee - Dallas

Migration and Refugee Services, Houston

Refugee Services of Texas - Amarillo

Refugee Services of Texas - Dallas

Texas Impact

## Utah

Catholic Community Services of Utah

# Utah Health & Human Rights

# **Vermont**

New England Survivors of Torture and Trauma Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society

# Virginia

Catholic Charities Diocese of Arlington
Charlottesville Social Services
Church World Service – Harrisonburg, Immigration & Refugee Program
International Neighbors, Inc.
International Rescue Committee - Charlottesville
Northern Virginia Family Service
Virginia Council of Churches

# **Washington**

Asian Counseling and Referral Service
Faith Action Network
International Rescue Committee - Seattle
Jewish Family Service - Seattle
OneAmerica
Tacoma Community House
Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
World Relief Seattle

# **Wisconsin**

Catholic Charities Diocese of La Crosse Marquette University Center for Peacemaking Wisconsin Council of Churches

# West Virginia

West Virginia Citizen Action Group

## Wyoming

Wyoming Association of Churches