

Evangelical Immigration Table

Bread for the World

Christian Community
Development Association

Council for Christian Colleges
and Universities

Ethics and Religious Liberty
Commission of the Southern
Baptist Convention

National Association of
Evangelicals

National Hispanic Christian
Leadership Conference

Sojourners

World Relief

World Vision

October 1, 2015

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest
United States Senate
326 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Schumer:

In recent weeks, the headlines have been dominated by the global refugee crisis. Today, there are more than 50 million refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people in the world, a higher number than at any time since World War II. The conflict in Syria alone has forced approximately 4 million individuals to flee the country, with millions more displaced internally: fully half of the Syrian population has been forced to flee their homes. Meanwhile, millions more are displaced by persecution in various other parts of the world, even if their stories have not captured as much media attention.

The United States of America has a proud history of welcoming refugees, and local churches have long been eager partners in the process of integration. As evangelical Christians, our faith compels us to respond with compassion and hospitality, recognizing that each is made in God's image and is a neighbor whom God commands us to love. Jesus, who as a small child was himself forced to flee from the violence of a tyrannical government, taught his disciples to do unto others as we would have them do to us; in the midst of this crisis, we hope that the American people will welcome others just as we would want to be welcomed if we were in the same desperate situation.

In recent years, the U.S. government has admitted approximately 60,000 to 70,000 refugees on an annual basis, down from a high of more than 200,000 refugees admitted and integrated into our communities in 1980. At this unique time in history, we believe that our nation could receive significantly more refugees than we have done in recent years. Resettlement to the United States is certainly not the sole nor the primary solution to this crisis, but as neighboring countries in the Middle East have taken in millions of these refugees and European allies such as Germany have pledged to receive as many as 800,000 of those seeking asylum, we are calling upon our government to do more as well, significantly increasing the total number of refugees admitted in the coming fiscal year.

As you do so, please know that there are many evangelical Christians within local churches and college campuses who are eager to volunteer their time and resources to assist in the resettlement and successful integration of these refugees. We are also committed to praying for you, for our leaders in Congress, and for the many other governmental authorities faced with immensely important decisions as you face this complex global challenge, while also praying for peaceful ends to the brutal conflicts that have forced so many to flee.

Sincerely,

The Evangelical Immigration Table

CC: Senators Vitter, Perdue, Grassley, Cornyn, Lee, Cruz, Tillis, Leahy, Feinstein, Durbin, Klobuchar, Franken, and Blumenthal

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President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

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