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Response from Senator Casey

2 messages

Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr. <senator@casey.senate.gov>
To: lturley@gmail.com

Wed, Oct 7, 2020 at 6:21 PM

Dear Leslie:

Thank you for contacting me about refugee resettlement in the United States. I appreciate hearing from you about this issue.

On October 1, 2020, President Trump announced plans to cap refugee admission levels at 15,000 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. I am concerned about this historically low limit on the number of refugees who can be resettled in the United States. In 2016, President Obama set the limit for refugee resettlement at 110,000, and refugee resettlement has historically averaged 95,000 per year. Humanitarian aid agencies have argued that a level of at least 75,000 is necessary to meet the needs of the current global refugee population.

I am also greatly concerned by President Trump's Executive Orders (EOs), which have limited refugee resettlement in the United States based on country of origin. These executive orders are ill-intentioned, discriminatory and cause more harm than good. In response, I have repeatedly expressed disagreement with the Trump administration over its shameful handling of refugee policy and have cosponsored legislation that curtails the President's ability to implement such harmful policies. The Administration's actions will result in turning away children fleeing barrel bombing in Syria, women and girls escaping human rights violations in Sudan and Somalia and brave people who risked their lives to work with our troops in Iraq. Preventing these vulnerable people from resettling in the United States as refugees does nothing to make our Nation safer. Further, lowering the level of overall resettlement will make it harder on our allies who are already absorbing the bulk of the refugees fleeing conflicts around the world. I believe the promulgation of the Executive Orders was driven by politics and discrimination, not by recommendations from national security professionals.

Our first priority must be to keep America safe, which means destroying terrorist networks wherever they are and ensuring that those offered refugee status go through the most rigorous possible screening. Refugee applicants are subject to the highest level of security checks for any category of traveler to the United States. The process, which involves 18-24 months of review, includes screening by the National Counterterrorism Center, the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center and the Departments of Homeland Security, Defense and State. This robust process includes biographic and biometric analysis. I am open to and have voted for ways to strengthen refugee screening in order to keep America safe, but I continue to believe that blanket travel bans and drastic reductions in refugee admissions do not make our nation safer. Homeland security decisions about who may travel into our country should be based on a robust security assessment of the individual seeking admittance, not blanket bans or severe limitations on admissions.

I have also taken steps to ensure that the United States resumes its role as a safe haven for those fleeing persecution and war. I am a cosponsor of S.1088, the Guaranteed Refugee Admissions Ceiling Enhancement (GRACE) Act of 2019, introduced by Senator Markey of Massachusetts. This bill would mandate that a minimum of 95,000 refugees be admitted to the United States per year, reinstating the historical average. I am also an original cosponsor of S.1123, the National Origin-Based Anti-discrimination for Non-immigrants (NO BAN) Act, which reverses the President's harmful travel ban and limits the executive authority of the President to implement future bans. Additionally, I am a cosponsor of S. 2936, the Refugee Protection Act which would bolster the U.S. Refugee Program, increase the minimum number of refugees admitted to the United States each year, expand protections for refugees, restore due process for asylum seekers and expand protections for immigrants cooperating with U.S. law enforcement and foreign nationals assisting U.S. service members in combat zones.

Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts with me. I will continue to monitor the administration's actions on refugee resettlement. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future about this or any other matter of importance to you.

For more information on this or other issues, I encourage you to visit my web site, <http://casey.senate.gov>. I hope you will find this online office a comprehensive resource to stay up-to-date on my work in Washington, request assistance from my office or share with me your thoughts on the issues that matter most to you and to Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,
Bob Casey
United States Senator

Leslie Turley <lturley@gmail.com>
Draft

Thu, Oct 15, 2020 at 3:01 PM

"And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

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