



JOHN R. KASICH
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

November 16, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

I am writing in regard to deficiencies in the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program, which have come under increased scrutiny following the horrific acts of terrorism which unfolded in Paris last Friday.

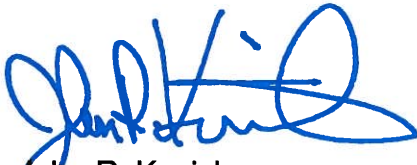
I do not believe the U.S. should accept additional Syrian refugees because security and safety issues cannot be adequately addressed. Recent testimony to the U.S. Senate Homeland Security Committee highlighted the lack of intelligence in Syria leading to unreliable results in background checks. In light of what happened last week, our government should not continue to grant refugee status to individuals from any country who have no personal information in federal databases or official papers.

As the governor of a large state that participates in the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program, with a history of welcoming individuals who were persecuted in their own country, I empathize with the plight of Syrians who are running from violent conditions and civil war. However, I am not confident in the process and procedures for adequately investigating security threats posed by potential refugees who may be resettled in the United States, specifically Ohio, and as governor it is my duty to ensure the safety and security of the citizens of my state. Until the rigor and depth of background checks are improved and their results are more transparently shared with states, I urge the federal government not to accept more Syrian refugees. In addition, I respectfully request that the federal government take no further action in resettling Syrian refugees into Ohio.

The lack of proper and reliable oversight in this program has been a growing concern for many months, not only as a security threat, but also from a humanitarian perspective. I wrote to you on August 28, 2015 about undocumented, unaccompanied minors and the mismanagement of the program by the Department of Health and Human Services which led to a human trafficking case in Ohio. I never received a response from you so I have enclosed that letter for your review. Your administration must do a better job of ensuring the safety of all Americans as well those individuals who turn to the U.S. for help.

America always needs to be part of the solution; however, I do not believe the process in place is robust enough to identify those individuals who seek to do harm and provides the appropriate safeguards.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John R. Kasich", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

John R. Kasich
Governor, State of Ohio



JOHN R. KASICH
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

August 28, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

Human trafficking and the exploitation of children is a terrible crime that can be reduced only by working together with our local and federal partners. In my state, we have been making major strides to work collaboratively with local, state and federal partners to crack down on traffickers, provide more resources to victims, and raise awareness so Ohioans can help stop trafficking before it starts.

This is why I am frustrated and disheartened to learn of recent human trafficking incident that occurred in my state. Specifically a federal grand jury recently indicted four individuals, two of whom have pled guilty, for trafficking Guatemalan nationals. According to the indictment, some of these victims were minors.

This case raises serious questions about the federal government's management of undocumented, unaccompanied minors. These children are in an unfamiliar country, thousands of miles from home and are inherently at a higher risk of abuse and neglect. I support Senator Rob Portman's call in a letter to Secretary Burwell for an investigation by the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations into this case.

Specifically, I have several areas of concern including:

Child Safety: With the federal government apparently seeking to place as many children as possible with sponsors in private homes, I am concerned with the procedures being followed to ensure that children are being placed in safe environments. In the past federal agencies, including the Office of Refugee

Resettlement, have alluded to screening procedures for these placements, but I am unsure of their thoroughness and effectiveness as evidenced by the aforementioned indictment which alleges that minors had been placed with sponsors in Ohio and were subsequently held in a condition of forced labor by these sponsors.

States have their own databases of allegations of child abuse, neglect and dependency, to which federal officials do not have access, and it is not clear that federal officials have asked to screen potential sponsors through these databases prior to placement. Although the Family Reunification Application asks for sponsor's citizenship information, it appears in this case the federal government did not verify the accuracy of the allegedly fraudulent information provided by the sponsors.

Communication With States: Currently, the federal government does not share with state officials information about the children placed in our states. I urge you to rethink this decision. The children can only benefit from having state and local children services officials aware that they are in their jurisdictions and ready to help them if needed. While concerns for privacy and security are legitimate, the states are obligated by numerous federal statutes and regulations to prevent the dissemination of protected client information. When states place children across state boundaries we regularly share sensitive information via the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. These terms standardize the practice and securely facilitate the information exchanges necessary to place children in adoptive and foster homes, as well as other settings, and to ensure that information remains secure. Has the Administration considered using the Compact as the mechanism for communicating information about the children to states?

A thorough federal/state discussion would enhance our ability to protect children here and prevent human trafficking crimes.

We must do all we can to prevent children from becoming victims of abuse, neglect or human trafficking once they reach this country. We can best protect these children if we share information and work together.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John R. Kasich", written in a cursive style.

John R. Kasich
Governor, State of Ohio