



November 19, 2015

We, the undersigned elected officials of the City of Lexington, Virginia, do hereby oppose the remarks of those elected officials and public figures who have advocated a ban on assisting those fleeing Syria seeking safety and a brighter future for themselves and their families.

We recognize the abundance of evidence strongly suggesting refugees do not cause terrorism. Most perpetrators of terrorist acts are domestic, not foreign, and those that are foreign are overwhelmingly not refugees. Furthermore, given available information at this point, no participant in either the recent Paris or Russian airliner attacks has been confirmed to be a Syrian refugee. All those identified as of the writing of this statement have been of European nationality. Should, in the future, a refugee be identified as a participant in either plot, it will constitute an outlier rather than any meaningful trend. According to the Migration Policy Institute, of the 784,000 refugees resettled in the United States since the attacks of 9/11, only one has been charged with plotting terrorist acts against a target within the United States.

We would remind those fearful of Syrian refugees that, according to the United Nations, more than half are children under the age of 18.

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, we recognize and celebrate that this nation was founded by immigrants, many of whom were also refugees fleeing oppression and violence. We declare it our patriotic duty as Americans to welcome refugees, from Syria or otherwise, with open arms into our community, commit to assist them in whatever manner we are able, and encourage our fellow citizens to do likewise.

Finally, we would point out to those officials attempting to discriminate against Syrians that no local or state level official possesses the authority to refuse refugees. In accordance with the American dedication to liberty, we urge our national leaders to take steps to alleviate this extreme human rights crisis by allowing the admission of refugees, regardless of nationality or religion, and not be complacent as so many, often children, lose their lives attempting to escape brutality and oppression.

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