

Dear President Trump and Members of Congress:

We write as educators in support of the U.S. refugee resettlement program. Refugees are our students and their parents; our friends and fellow teachers; and valued members of our communities.

Refugee children have suffered from stolen childhoods. They have endured more than any child should ever have to, including for many the death of a parent or sibling, kidnappings, bombings, walking continuously day and night, sexual assault, years in a refugee camp, and other traumatic events. Every day, we see firsthand the resilience, passion for learning, and determination of refugee children and parents who overcome these obstacles.

Children learn best when they are safe, healthy, and valued. Refugee resettlement provides children who have been forced to flee their homes due to their parents' race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group an opportunity to begin again--to heal, learn, and grow. Resettlement is the last resort for refugees who are forced to flee from their homes and cannot find safety in a nearby country.

Grateful for the opportunity to live in safety and peace, refugee children work hard to pursue their dreams and foster skills that will help them build a better future. They will grow up to be the next generation of scientists, entrepreneurs, doctors, authors, artists, lawyers, teachers, and more. They will also become powerful ambassadors of American values and democracy to their countries of origin and the world at large.

It has been a privilege to watch refugee children learn about the ways that this country values freedom, liberty, and equal opportunity. Interacting with their parents is similarly heartwarming and humbling, as they have courageously sacrificed so much for their children's future and are steadfastly committed to education and excellence for their families.

We're proud that this country has welcomed Jewish refugees during World War II, Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s, and, more recently, refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Sudan, and many other countries experiencing turmoil. Our leadership on refugee resettlement has encouraged more than 27 other countries to establish or increase their own resettlement efforts, and refugee hosting countries to keep their doors open.

We urge you to support refugee resettlement and affirm the transformational role it plays in the lives of refugees themselves and community members like us who are forever changed by our interactions with these resilient new Americans. Thank you for your public service, in this country that stands for so much to so many.

Sincerely,

Arizona

Patricia Always, RCIA, Franciscan Renewal Center, Paradise Valley, Arizona

California

Patrick Higgins, Theology Teacher, Catholic Social Teaching, La Salle High School, Pasadena, California
Janet Kraus, English Teacher, Vista High School, Richmond, California
Linda Ziegahn, PhD, University of California, Davis, Davis, California

Marguerite Multani, UTLA-R, Los Angeles, California

Colorado

Heather, U.S. Program Officer, The Women's Bakery, Denver, Colorado

Lindsay Jackson, Colorado State University, Denver, Colorado

Naomi Olson, Denver, Colorado

Connecticut

George Cooksey, Guilford High School, Guilford, Connecticut

Katy Reddick, Frank Ward Strong Middle School, Durham, Connecticut

Georgia

Dr. Myrtle Lewin, PhD, Professor Emerita of Mathematics, Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia

Kelsey Smith, After School Class Instructor, Freedom Middle School, Stone Mountain, Georgia

Dorothy Foster, ESL for Adults of White County, Cleveland, Georgia

Sherry Perkins, Special Education (retired), White County Middle School, Cleveland, Georgia

Idaho

Amanda Laib, Instructor of Geology and Chemistry, College of Western Idaho, Boise, Idaho

Illinois

Susan Michalowski, Librarian, St. John of the Cross, Western Spring, Illinois

Laura Smith, English Language Teacher, Indo-American Center, Chicago, Illinois

Mary Hope Griffin, PhD, Oakton Community College, River Forest, Illinois

Kelsey Howard, International Admission Counselor, Roosevelt University, Chicago, Illinois

Iowa

Tawnua Tenley, Mount Vernon Community School District, Mount Vernon, Iowa

Kansas

Teresa Van Zant, Green Springs Elementary, Olathe, Kansas

Christy Bomberger, Frontier Trail Middle School, Olathe, Kansas

Kentucky

Chasati Haden-McCowan, Danville High School, Danville, Kentucky

Maryland

Carrie Noel-Nosbaum, World Language Teacher, Hammond High School, Columbia, Maryland

Karin Radhe, Teacher, German & French, Hammond High School, Columbia, Maryland

Massachusetts

Sarah Riad, BSN, RN, University of Massachusetts, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Michigan

Alice Gallmeyer, SLP Intern, East Leonard Elementary, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Michelle Haight, 6ELA Teacher, Clawson Middle School, Troy, Michigan

Nichole Hartrick, STEM Middle School, Dearborn, Michigan

New Jersey

Sarah Vanacore, Learning Specialist, Rutgers University-Camden, Camden, New Jersey

New Mexico

Debra Taylor, New Mexico Philharmonic Young Musician Initiative, Albuquerque, New Mexico

New York

Anine Booth, Wildlife Conservation Society, Pearl River, New York

Dr. Martha Chatterjee, Refugee Resettlement Educator, Committee on Teaching about the UN (CTAUN), the United Nations in New York, New York

Ellen Freiburger, New Rochelle, New York

Aileen Heiman, Park Slope Jewish Center, Brooklyn, New York

Rebecca Reimers, Pre-school Lead Teacher and Career Educator, White Plains, New York

Amy Nathan, Author of educational books for children, Larchmont, New York

Anna Spoden, Associate Director of Special Education, New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math & Science III, Brooklyn, New York

Meredith Hall, The New School for Social Research, New York, New York

Nadia Kalman, Reading Tutor, PS 315, Brooklyn, New York

Randi Weingarten, Teacher on Leave, Clara Barton HS, Brooklyn, New York

Brooke Elizabeth Pierce, EdM, Freelance Adult ESL Instructor and Graduate Student, International Development, Buffalo State College Community Academic Center, Buffalo, New York

Lois Margaret Franco, The Fort Hamilton School, Brooklyn, New York

North Carolina

Jennifer Gallo, New Hanover County, Wilmington, North Carolina

Mrs. Decerie Herrera, Refugee Resettlement, NCVA, Cary, North Carolina

Lauren Locke, University of North Carolina Wilmington, Wilmington, North Carolina

Susan Miller, Cape Fear Community College, Wilmington, North Carolina

Kahla Nelson, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Wilmington, North Carolina

Katie Thompson, Music Education, Duke School, Durham, North Carolina

Paige Ryan, Millbrook High School, Raleigh, North Carolina

Poul Ashley Prio, East Cary MS, Cary, North Carolina

Oregon

Rev. Dr. Chuck Currie, University Chaplain and Director of Center for Peace and Spirituality, Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon

Laura Adams, Warner Pacific College, Portland, Oregon

Pennsylvania

Sean, Project Learn School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Rabbi Alanna Sklover, Germantown Jewish Centre Religious School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dr. Sarah Stanlick, Director, Center for Community Engagement, Faculty, Sociology & Anthropology, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Dr. Caryl Waggett, Chair, Global Health Studies, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania

James M. Calderone, EdD, Misericordia University, Dallas, Pennsylvania

Tennessee

Alli Barns, AZ Kelley Elementary, Nashville, Tennessee

Texas

Aisha Bhadelia, Social Studies Teacher, Economics and Sociology, Round Rock High School, Round Rock, Texas

Alethia Garrett, Kindergarten Teacher, Idea Rundberg Academy, Austin, Texas

Cheryl Kaufman, PhD, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas

Amy Miller, Director of Education, World Affairs Council of Dallas/Fort Worth, Dallas, Texas

Julia Laws Moser, Western Hills Elementary, Fort Worth, Texas

Amanda Peters, AP Human Geography, Frisco High School, Frisco, Texas

Courtney Tyler, Lubbock Christian University, Lubbock, Texas

Marlee Vandergrift, Communities In Schools Intern, Indian Spring Middle School, Waco, Texas

Linda Abramson Evans, Lecturer, English as a Second Language, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

Kathryn Boswell, retired special educator, 33 yrs, Public school systems in Austin, Texas

Vermont

Jennifer Cohen, Clarendon Elementary, Rutland, Vermont

Dr. Emily Gleason, Castleton University, Castleton, Vermont

Kathleen A. Guinness, Poultney Elementary School (retired), Poultney, Vermont

Dina Janis, Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont

Robin Ogg, Speech Language Pathologist, Rutland Intermediate School, Chittenden, Vermont

Allison O'Brien, ESL Instructor and Global Programs Associate, Vermont Academy, Saxtons River, Vermont

Catherine Grant, High School French Teacher, St. Johnsbury Academy, St. Johnsbury, Vermont

Virginia

Katharine G. Panfil, Ph.D (retired), Arlington Public Schools, Arlington, Virginia

Thomas J. Shields, M.A.T., PH.D., University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia

Taylor F. Walle, Assistant Professor of English, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia

Washington

Christina Kerstetter, MEd, Education Policy, Sammamish, Washington

Washington DC

Roland L. Reed, Associate Professor of Playwriting (retired) The Catholic University of America, Department of Theatre and Drama, Washington, DC