



State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

November 16, 2015

To Members of the General Assembly,

Last Friday, terrorists launched an attack on Paris resulting in at least 129 deaths and 352 injuries. Shortly following the attacks, reports surfaced that at least one of the attackers entered France by claiming to be a refugee hoping to escape the conflict in Syria. Upon learning this, I asked my staff to reevaluate the refugee resettlement program in South Carolina.

Following that reevaluation, and personal conversations with intelligence officials, I have asked Secretary John Kerry and the United States Department of State to suspend efforts to resettle Syrian refugees in South Carolina. Currently, no Syrian refugees fleeing the current conflict have been resettled in South Carolina, and I hope Secretary Kerry will honor my request for that to remain the case.

To be clear, I support the refugee resettlement program as it was originally intended. This program provides refuge to persons forced to flee their home country due to political, racial, and religious persecution. For example, Iraqi interpreters who have assisted the United States military in the war on terror, saving countless American lives, have come to America through the refugee program. These individuals put their life on the line to make sure Americans can effectively fight a war. For these individuals, and others in similar situations, the refugee program quite literally saves their lives.

That being said, the apparent lack of historical and verifiable intelligence with many Syrian refugees makes it difficult, if not impossible, to thoroughly vet individuals seeking to enter the United States as a refugee. My primary duty as Governor is to ensure the safety of South Carolina citizens. Until these security issues are addressed, I have asked that the United States Department of State suspend efforts to resettle Syrian refugees in South Carolina.

Thank you.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nikki", is written over the typed name "Nikki R. Haley".

Nikki R. Haley