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Senate General Committee - Refugees

The General Subcommittee met today for their first meeting on two refugee resettlement related bills. (S. 928 (Bryant) and S. 997 (Bright))

Karen Wingo, DSS, testified about the process and background of the Refugee Resettlement Program.

Lindsay Seawell, Refugee Services Coordinator with Lutheran Services Carolinas, addressed questions from the members about their services. Sen. Bright asked that she return at the next meeting to address any concerns the organization may have with requiring DSS to register and track refugees (S.997).

Chief Keel testified regarding his concerns that the bills inhibit information sharing with state agencies and the federal government about the refugees in the program. Sen. Bright said that he conferred with Chairman Bryant and his concerns will be addressed in an amendment to the bill.

Sen. Bright was clear about his lack of confidence in the federal government for screening and background checks of each refugee. Sen. Johnson consistently stressed that only the federal government can make the assurances that the proper procedures and protocol are taken before a refugee is placed in the state.

The Full General Committee will meet tomorrow for a report of testimony delivered today and the subcommittee will meet again next week to discuss amendments to the bills.

Members: Senators Bright (Chair), Shealy, and Johnson

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