
From: Janet Towle <JTowle@lscarolinas.net>
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2016 4:42 PM
To: Haley, Nikki
Subject: Refugee Resettlement in South Carolina - A Message from Ted W. Goins, Lutheran Services Carolinas

January 21, 2016

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton St.
Columbia, SC 29201-3740

Governor Haley:

On the evening of January 18, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan distributed leaflets in the neighborhood around a Lutheran Services Carolinas office in Columbia that provides refugee services. The anti-Muslim leaflets singled out Lutheran Services Carolinas for its role in refugee resettlement and also featured crude racist verse directed toward African Americans. The leaflet included a North Carolina phone number and a mailing address in Pelham, N.C., which is reportedly home to a KKK group known for protesting the removal of the Confederate flag from the South Carolina statehouse and for its recruitment efforts outside of North Carolina. The Columbia incident is being investigated by law enforcement.

As president of Lutheran Services Carolinas, I take it as a badge of honor to be targeted by the Ku Klux Klan. LSC rejects hate, whether it's directed at religion, race, or culture. LSC will continue to walk with all the people we serve, and we call on the people of the Carolinas to rise up and speak out against discrimination and separation.

The toxic sentiments reflected on the KKK leaflets are akin to the hatred and persecution that refugees are fleeing in their home countries. Refugees who enter the United States are vetted by multiple, redundant systems and typically must wait years in international refugee camps before they can enter this country.

No matter how complicated issues related to refugee resettlement become, we cannot allow groups like the Klan to seize the moment to promote hate and discrimination. We must send a clear message to this group and to the world that there is no place for racism and bigotry in South Carolina, and we can do that by rejecting legislation that promotes fear and hurts a group of people who have already suffered tremendously.

We can lift up the thousands of refugees – people of many faiths, cultures, and ethnicities – who have resettled successfully and without incident in South Carolina and the thousands of refugees – South Carolina residents – who are making a positive impact on the communities where they live and work. And we can replace fear with compassion by continuing to serve the properly vetted refugees seeking protection.

Lutheran Services Carolinas has been helping refugees for many years. We understand the system, and we are good at what we do. Please allow us to continue to pursue our mission.

Yours in Christ,

Ted W. Goins, Jr.
President
Lutheran Services Carolinas



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