



Legislation Text

File #: 0268X-2015, **Version:** 1

To express the City of Columbus' commitment as a place of refuge for those fleeing violence in Syria

WHEREAS, The City of Columbus is proud to be an ethnically diverse city and home to one-quarter of Ohio's foreign-born population; and

WHEREAS, More than 100,000 of the region's residents are New Americans; and

WHEREAS, The people of Columbus have a long history of opening their arms and homes to the vulnerable and disadvantaged; and

WHEREAS, The conflict in Syria has caused a refugee crisis, which the City of Columbus will not ignore; and

WHEREAS, More than seven million Syrians have been displaced from their homes by war, many referred to the United States of America for resettlement are the most vulnerable from Syria's collapse: torture survivors, people with special medical needs, women who head households and children; and

WHEREAS, The number of refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria to other countries has now eclipsed four million people, confirming the Syrian refugee crisis as the single largest refugee crisis in a generation; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama has committed to accepting 10,000 Syrian refugees in the United States within the next year; and

WHEREAS, those wishing to come to the United States must apply through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Refugee Agency, and are subject to the highest level of security checks of any category of traveler to our country; and

WHEREAS, Refugees are vetted by the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center/Intelligence Community, the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and are subject to recurrent vetting; and

WHEREAS, Refugees from Syria are subject to additional screening that verifies what caused them to flee their homes; and

WHEREAS, The intense background and medical checks required of refugees can take up to two years to complete; and

WHEREAS, Half of all Syrian refugees brought to the United States are children, a quarter are adults, and approximately two percent are single males of combat age; and

WHEREAS, The Refugee Act of 1980 declared it “the historic policy of the United States to respond to the urgent needs of persons subject to persecution in their homelands” and gave the President of the United States the power to handle an “unforeseen” emergency refugee situation” such as one involving “grave humanitarian concerns”; and

WHEREAS, Syrian refugees should be treated with dignity, care and compassion that every human being deserves; and

WHEREAS, Refugees legally admitted to the United States require housing and support such as counseling, education, health care, food, security, case management and legal assistance; and

WHEREAS, The City of Columbus has shown its historical commitment to placing deserving families throughout our neighborhoods and community; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

That the City of Columbus affirms its commitment to be a place of refuge for those fleeing the conflict in Syria.

That all city departments, local businesses, and charitable and non-profit organizations are urged to work with all governmental and non-governmental organizations to provide shelter and sustenance for refugee families relocating to Columbus and integrating into our community.