



Legislation Text

File #: 0344X-2019, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND: In response to executive order 13888 “Enhancing State and Local Involvement in Refugee Resettlement,” issued September 26, 2019 and which instructs the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to, for the first time, seek written consent from state and local governments before they can accept refugees in their jurisdictions, it is critical that the City of Columbus reaffirm its commitment to welcoming refugees.

This Resolution affirms that the City of Columbus is a Welcoming City and urges other local governments to join in support of a regional commitment to resettle the most vulnerable refugees.

To reaffirm that the City of Columbus is a Welcoming City and to reaffirm support for resettling refugees.

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus represents and welcomes all residents regardless of national origin, and is committed to making Columbus a city that provides opportunity for all; and

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus is home to an increasingly diverse population, including refugees and immigrants from across the world, who add to the economic strength and cultural richness of the community; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 more than 70.8 million people worldwide were forced from their homes, more than any time in recorded history, including over 25.9 million refugees, and more than half of the world’s refugees are children; and

WHEREAS, by definition, refugees are people who have fled violence in their home countries, including fear of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, social status, or political affiliation; and

WHEREAS, resettlement to the U.S. is only available for those who demonstrate the greatest and most immediate need for protection, including torture survivors, the physically disabled, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and women and lone children at risk - all of whom can neither return home nor stay in their host country due to their extreme vulnerability, and takes place only after eligible refugees undergo a rigorous selection, security vetting, and medical screening process; and

WHEREAS, in February 2017, Mayor Andrew J. Ginther signed an executive order that expanded refugee rights in Columbus and solidified the city’s dedication to preserving them; and

WHEREAS, with the increasing national effort to lower refugee admissions, the City of Columbus has a responsibility to reaffirm its commitment to welcoming refugees; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the City of Columbus to reduce or eliminate any barriers that adversely affect the opportunity of all residents to achieve success and experience peace and prosperity; **now, therefore:**

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

SECTION 1. That the City of Columbus is a Welcoming City and reaffirms its support for resettling refugees no matter their race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality or country of origin; and

SECTION 2. That to the extent allowed, this Council consents to and welcomes initial resettlement in Columbus as per the terms of the Executive Order 13888, “On Enhancing State and Local Involvement in Resettlement,” and

SECTION 3. That this Council’s consent and outreach regarding Executive Order 13888 is not in any way an endorsement of the legality or intent of the Order; and

SECTION 4. That this Council urges the Governor of Ohio and all local governments to consent to the initial resettlement of refugees as per the terms of Executive Order 13888; and

SECTION 5. That a certified copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration; and the Office of Governor Mike DeWine; and

SECTION 6. That the City of Columbus calls upon our local, state, and federal representatives and other local jurisdictions in Central Ohio to join in support of a regional commitment to resettle the most vulnerable refugees and expand opportunity and inclusion for all residents.

SECTION 7. That this resolution shall take effect at the earliest date allowable under law.