

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Our number one priority must be protecting the American homeland and keeping the American people safe from terror attacks. The recent bombing of a Russian airliner and the coordinated, barbaric terrorist attacks in Paris should erase any doubt about whether ISIS is simply a regional threat that can be contained geographically. Instead, these horrific events have made it crystal clear that ISIS is intent on waging a global war against our way of life, and that innocent civilians are the targets of these Islamic extremists.

Eliminating the threat posed by ISIS requires a comprehensive strategy – one that combines increased American diplomatic leadership on the global stage, a renewed military focus on defeating ISIS in Iraq and Syria, and enhanced intelligence tactics to combat the threat of homegrown terror that conspires with ISIS. However, one area that must also be immediately addressed is the growing concern that ISIS fighters and sympathizers could exploit the Syrian and Iraqi refugee crisis to enter the U.S. through the refugee resettlement program.

It has been publicly reported that your administration is moving to accelerate the number of Syrian refugees taken in by the United States in the coming year. In an interview on November 15, Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes sought to allay concerns by stating that, “[W]ith respect to refugees, we have the most extensive security vetting that we have ever had to deal with Syrian refugees coming into the United States.”

We do not doubt that the administration seeks to screen refugees from Syria to the best of its abilities. However, it is entirely appropriate for the American people to be alarmed when they hear FBI Director James Comey and the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, voice concerns about the ability of ISIS-affiliated individuals to hide among the waves of Syrian refugees.

Balancing our nation’s compassion with our basic security needs is particularly difficult during times of great uncertainty and heightened threats. However, given the inability to vet these individuals against government records in Syria, we ask that the administration respond to the legitimate concerns of the American people by ceasing the flow of refugees from Syria or Iraq until there is an updated system in place that can actually verify the background of each refugee.

ISIS’ techniques are rapidly evolving and there is no room for error when the stakes are so incredibly high. Before moving forward, we must have 100 percent certainty that no individual

with sympathies to ISIS is brought into the United States. In this war on terror, the safety and security of our nation demands that we stay one step ahead.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Dold
Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress




Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress



Member of Congress