

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



November 23, 2015

The Honorable Jay Inslee, Governor
State of Washington
Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504

Sent electronically

Dear Governor Inslee:

Thank you for your strong leadership on the Syrian refugee crisis. Your public comments reflect the very best of Washington State.

While refugee relocation is a federal issue, there are calls from some for the state to take action against placing refugees here. Unfortunately, the debate has fallen to the level of political fear-mongering, bigotry and racism.

Your leadership has historic precedent, when in 1975 Governor Dan Evans led Washington State in welcoming over 1,500 Vietnamese refugees in the wake of the Vietnam War. This came at a time when other states around the country closed the doors of opportunity to families seeking a better life. Forty years later, these families are a vibrant part of our community and our economy.

Those involved in the anti-refugee discourse should understand that the federal government has a strong vetting process in place, taking as long as two years before refugees are settled in the country. As noted by our leaders, the priority is caring for the thousands of women, children, the elderly and the infirm who have lost their homes, family members, and their country.

Safety and humanitarianism aren't mutually exclusive. We can provide both, just as we have for many years during which we welcomed so many new people to our country. Washington State has a long and proud tradition of caring for those in need. The United States welcomes up to 75,000 refugees to our shores each year – people who through no fault of their own have lost everything. Our nation learned a painful but valuable lesson after the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. We must never again sacrifice our values as Americans by giving into unwarranted fear.

In today's world we all need to be vigilant concerning safety. But we must also remain vigilant against fear conquering our humanity. This crisis is about the search for freedom, hope and security in a time of violence and instability, a journey many of our forbearers took themselves.

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Again, thank you for providing a rational, reasonable voice in this debate.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jessyn Farrell in black ink.

Representative Jessyn Farrell
46th Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Joe Fitzgibbon in black ink.

Representative Joe Fitzgibbon
34th Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Mia Gregerson in black ink.

Representative Mia Gregerson
33rd Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Sam Hunt in black ink.

Representative Sam Hunt
22nd Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Laurie Jinkins in black ink.

Representative Laurie Jinkins
27th Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Jim Moeller in black ink.

Representative Jim Moeller
49th Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Jeff Morris in black ink.

Representative Jeff Morris
40th Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Luis Moscoso in black ink.

Representative Luis Moscoso
1st Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Tina Orwall in black ink.

Representative Tina Orwall
33rd Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Strom Peterson in black ink.

Representative Strom Peterson
21st Legislative District

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Handwritten signature of Eric Pettigrew in black ink.

Representative Eric Pettigrew
37th Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Gerry Pollet in black ink.

Representative Gerry Pollet
46th Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Chris Reykdal in black ink.

Representative Chris Reykdal
22nd Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Cindy Ryu in black ink.

Representative Cindy Ryu
32nd Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Sharon Tomiko Santos in black ink.

Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos
37th Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Tana Senn in black ink.

Representative Tana Senn
41st Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Gael Tarleton in black ink.

Representative Gael Tarleton
36th Legislative District

Handwritten signature of Brady Walkinshaw in black ink.

Representative Brady Walkinshaw
43rd Legislative District