

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 25

Expressing the sense of Congress on the admission of refugees and immigrants to the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 15, 2017

Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. MOORE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. SOTO) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress on the admission of refugees and immigrants to the United States.

Whereas, on January 27, 2017, the President of the United States signed an Executive order titled “Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States”;

Whereas this Executive order suspends the Issuance of Visas and Other Immigration Benefits to Nationals of Countries of Particular Concern, which include the countries Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, and Yemen; and suspension of the issuance of visas and other immigration benefits will last 90 days;

Whereas agents of U.S. Customs and Border Protection were also instructed to detain all lawful permanent residents from the above countries at U.S. Ports of Entry;

Whereas this Executive order instructs that “The Secretary of State shall suspend the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) for 120 days.”;

Whereas the President stated in the Executive order, “I hereby proclaim that the entry of nationals of Syria as refugees is detrimental to the interests of the United States and thus suspend any such entry until such time as I have determined that sufficient changes have been made to the USRAP to ensure that admission of Syrian refugees is consistent with the national interest.”; and Congress does not agree with this determination;

Whereas the execution of this Executive order did not make any provision for individuals already in transit to the United States under the U.S. Refugee Admission Program (USRAP); and as a consequence, multiple individuals and families were denied entry at U.S. ports of entry after already fleeing highly dangerous and unsafe conditions in their country of origin;

Whereas the Executive order is the first Executive order since 2001 to suspend refugee resettlement;

Whereas since 2001, the refugee admissions process has been expanded to include more agencies and review processes in determining the security risk of each individual applying for resettlement;

Whereas today, the refugee admissions process can take up to 18 to 24 months. Applying individuals must pass through a series of security screenings, including biographic and biometric checks, medical screenings, foren-

sic document testing, and in-person interviews; their information is reviewed against law enforcement and intelligence agencies, including the Department of State, Department of National Counterterrorism Center, Department of Defense, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Department of Homeland Security, and other Federal agencies;

Whereas the spouse of the individual who carried out an act of terrorism on December 2, 2015, in San Bernardino, California, was admitted to the United States on a K–1 visa for spouses of U.S. citizens; she did not apply for refugee resettlement; and the review process for a K–1 visa is not part of the U.S. Refugee Admission Program;

Whereas furthermore, this Executive order also instructs the Secretary of State to immediately suspend the Visa Interview Waiver Program and “requires that all individuals seeking a nonimmigrant visa undergo an in-person interview, subject to specific statutory exceptions”;

Whereas the suspension of the Visa Interview Waiver Program will significantly increase the processing time for all visa renewals, including for students pursuing their education in the United States; and individuals that renew visas through the Visa Interview Waiver Program are an important contribution to U.S. institutions of higher learning and the U.S. economy; and

Whereas if these individuals under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program or applying to receive a visa were involved in credible threats against the United States, immigration, intelligence, and law enforcement officials would have already carried out enforcement action to prevent any terrorist attack: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) the Executive order titled “Protecting the
 4 Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the
 5 United States” is not a testament to the United
 6 States as a Nation that is welcoming to all regard-
 7 less of race, religion, or country of origin;

8 (2) the President must immediately allow for
 9 the continued entry of refugees that have already
 10 been granted admission to the United States by the
 11 U.S. Refugee Admissions Program;

12 (3) the United States should continue to reset-
 13 tle refugees that need protection regardless of their
 14 country of origin;

15 (4) lawful permanent residents be granted entry
 16 into the United States regardless of their country of
 17 origin; and

18 (5) the Visa Interview Waiver Program not be
 19 suspended while the Secretary of State conducts a
 20 review of all nonimmigrant visa reciprocity agree-
 21 ments to ensure that there are no disruptions to
 22 communities, institutions of education, and inter-
 23 state commerce.

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