



Legislation Text

File #: RES 16-2122, **Version:** 1

Supporting the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Saint Paul and calling upon other Minnesota communities to support a stronger national effort to resettle the most vulnerable Syrian refugees.

WHEREAS, there are more refugees in the world today than at any time since World War II, including millions of Syrians who have fled their country since the Syrian conflict began in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Turkey is now hosting almost 3 million Syrian refugees, neighboring countries are hosting another 2 million; and

WHEREAS, Europe is processing the asylum applications of more than 1 million Syrians; and

WHEREAS, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has determined that 10 percent of Syrian refugees are in need of resettlement to nations outside of the region due to a heightened vulnerability to further harm, but less than 200,000 resettlement places have been pledged by nations - with the U.S. pledging only 10,000 places this year; and

WHEREAS, Syrian refugees in need of resettlement are identified based on their vulnerabilities and risk of further exposure to violence and exploitation - including children traveling alone, female-headed households, victims of torture, the physically disabled, and members of the LGBTI community; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees are making life and death decisions to flee Syria and neighboring countries because they are unable to access shelter, health care, education, or protection, and neighboring countries have closed their borders to new arrivals; and

WHEREAS, 7000 refugees have died trying to cross the Mediterranean into Europe since January 2015, and two children die every day in this crossing; and

WHEREAS, we commend the United States for the resettlement of over 14,000 Syrian refugees since the beginning of the conflict in 2011, but note the ability of and need for our country to do more; and

WHEREAS, all refugees resettled by the United States undergo an extensive and rigorous security screening process including biometric analysis, and all Syrians go through an additional screening procedure; and

WHEREAS, the refugee organizations in Minnesota, including The International Institute of Minnesota, Arrive Ministries, United Nations Association of MN, The American Refugee Committee, The Minnesota Council of Churches, The Center for Victims of Torture as well as numerous other community organizations and religious institutions have declared their support for resettling Syrian refugees in the Twin Cities; and

WHEREAS, Twin Cities refugee resettlement organizations have resettled more than 12,500 refugees in the Twin Cities since 2011 from 40 countries including Afghanistan, Armenia, Belarus, Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, China, Congo, Cuba, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kampuchea, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Laos, Liberia, Moldova, Nepal, Palestine, Russia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Togo, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Zaire; and

BE IT RESOLVED, the Saint Paul City Council declares its support for the resettlement of Syrian refugees in

Saint Paul and calls upon other Minnesota communities to join them in supporting a stronger national effort to resettle the most vulnerable Syrian refugees.