

A RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION DECLARING GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL'S OPPOSITION TO THE RELOCATION OF REFUGEES FROM THE UNITED STATES REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM IN GREENVILLE COUNTY AND THE REJECTION OF STATE FUNDS TO ASSIST IN THE PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, Greenville County Council is the elected governing body authorized to adopt appropriate ordinances, resolutions and police powers to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the County; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government has indicated that thousands of refugees from the Middle East will be relocated to the United States in the next few years through the Refugee Resettlement Program; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that each state will receive these refugees through designated relocation agencies approved by the Federal Government; and

WHEREAS, the refugee relocation as presently arranged will present serious problems to a local jurisdictions in financial and security areas; and

WHEREAS, this resettlement process will create financial areas of concern with refugees and their families presenting unfunded burdens to schools, law enforcement, living arrangements, and health care providers; and because 94% of Middle Eastern refugees are on food stamps, 68.5% are on welfare and 73 % are on Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, many South Carolina citizens are without healthcare because of a lack of money for Medicaid in South Carolina; and

WHEREAS, there are serious security concerns with the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") indicating that they are unable to fully vet incoming Syrian refugees according to testimony at a House Homeland Security committee hearing in February; and

WHEREAS, Michael Steinback, Assistant Director for the FBI, has expressed concern over the program in telling a Congressional Committee investigating the refugee relocation program that "[w]e don't have it under control . . . we're doing the best we can. If I were to say that we had it under control, then I would say I know of every single individual traveling. I don't. And I don't know every person there and I don't know everyone coming back. So it's not even close to being under control"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Steinbeck informed the House Homeland Security Committee that bringing in Syrian refugees "pose a greater risk to Americans" as it raises the possibility that refugees could have connections to foreign terrorist groups; and

WHEREAS, ISIS has vowed to infiltrate refuge groups all over the world so as to enter countries under the guise of a persecuted refugee; and

WHEREAS, a State Budget proviso adopted by the South Carolina General Assembly this past session concerning the Refugee Resettlement Program states that “no state funds shall be expended to assist in the United States Refugee Resettlement Program unless the county council of the county where the resettlement is to occur approves the relocation”; and

WHEREAS, this resettlement is being directed and funded through a federal program under a bureau of the U.S. State Department, and where the Governor’s office has indicated that only federal pass through funds are being used in South Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Governor Nikki Haley did sign off on an abstract to have the state government authorize refugee resettlement in South Carolina and this authorization is annually renewed; and

WHEREAS, the County Council hereby expresses its concern over United States Refugee Resettlement Program, and any possible State expenditures for the program in Greenville County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Greenville County Council will not approve or proceed with the United States Refugee Resettlement Program and rejects the expenditure of state funds to assist the United States Refugee Resettlement Program in Greenville County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Greenville County Council petitions Governor Nikki Haley to not renew the authorization for refugee resettlement in South Carolina in 2016 until:

1. DSS shows evidence and certifies that the proposed refugee resettlement program will not have any negative impact on the provision of services to the current residents of South Carolina at the current level and will not cause an increase in the DSS budget.
2. The State Board of Education is able to show evidence and certify that to the Governor that the refugee resettlement program will not have an adverse impact on the local school districts and that local school districts will not need additional resource.
3. The department of Homeland Security certifies to SLED that each refugee entering South Carolina has been subject to a thorough background check similar to the federal form E86 used to screen applicants for employment with DHS and that DHS has been able to determine that none of the refugees pose any national security threat.

ADOPTED IN REGULAR MEETING THIS 17th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2015.

GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Bob Taylor, Chairman
Greenville County Council

ATTEST:

Theresa B. Kizer
Clerk to Council

Joseph M. Kernell
County Administrator