



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

RESOLUTION NO. 160743

Introduced September 8, 2016

Councilmembers Gym, Blackwell and Oh

RESOLUTION

Urging the United States federal government to show leadership on the humanitarian crisis in Syria by resettling a greater number of Syrian refugees.

WHEREAS, The Syrian conflict, which began in March, 2011, has produced one of the world's largest humanitarian crises in modern history; and

WHEREAS, The impact of the Syrian crisis is far-reaching, leaving nearly 13.5 million Syrians in need of assistance and 6.5 million displaced; and

WHEREAS, 4.5 million Syrians have fled to neighboring countries which now face overwhelming numbers of refugees, insufficient international support, and security concerns; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations has called for resettlement of over 400,000 refugees facing dire conditions including children without parents, victims of violence, and others who face imminent danger; and

WHEREAS, The United States has a venerable history of leadership in refugee resettlement, which flows from our nation's deeply-held commitment to freedom and multiculturalism; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations General Assembly is holding a summit to address the refugee and migrant crisis, driven by an unceasing and horrifying war that is tearing apart communities in Syria and destabilizing the broader region; and

WHEREAS, On September 20, 2016, President Obama will speak before the United Nations to urge other world leaders to admit more refugees into their countries and increase funding aid to areas impacted by the Syrian crisis; and

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WHEREAS, To date, the United States has only supported two percent of the refugees needing resettlement; and

WHEREAS, President Obama has suggested that the United States increase the number of Syrian refugees admitted to this country, citing Philadelphia as one of the cities under consideration for welcoming these refugees; and

WHEREAS, Refugees in the program are all registered with the United Nations and cannot return to Syria because of a well-founded fear of persecution and will be reviewed by a proven vetting system in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has two strong refugee resettlement programs, HIAS Pennsylvania and Nationalities Service Center, which have already welcomed Syrian families to our city; and

WHEREAS, The Arab American Community Development Corporation of Philadelphia has been providing supports to refugees and has convened an interfaith, interethnic coalition to further support refugee resettlement; and

WHEREAS, In keeping with Philadelphia's traditions of diversity, tolerance and humanitarianism, there has been an outpouring of support by those of Christian, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and other faiths who are contacting Philadelphia's resettlement agencies seeking to provide donations and other supports to refugees from Syria and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Regional Refugee Provider Collaborative unites nonprofit resettlement, ethnic self-help, local and state government agencies and other interested stakeholders to coordinate service delivery and advocate for refugee integration in our City: and

WHEREAS, By all accounts, Philadelphia is ready, willing, and able to play its part in the crucial work of welcoming some of the millions of refugees displaced by violence and war who are currently strewn across the Earth and offer them the hope of peace, prosperity, and new beginnings; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That this Council urges the United States federal government to show leadership on the humanitarian crisis in Syria by resettling a greater number of Syrian refugees.