



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
P.O. BOX 001
TRENTON
08625
(609) 292-6000

CHRIS CHRISTIE
GOVERNOR

November 17, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

As Governor, my Number One obligation and sworn oath is to keep the residents of New Jersey safe. The threat posed to New Jersey by ISIS is very real. I write to inform you that I will not accept any refugees from Syria in the wake of the deadly terrorist attack in Paris.

The FBI director testified before Congress that the federal government does not have the background information necessary to effectively conduct proper security checks on Syrian nationals. Director Comey explained: "We can query our database until the cows come home, but there will be nothing show[ing] up because we have no record of them."

Additionally, when the federal government places a refugee in New Jersey or any other state with the assistance of a nongovernmental organization, there is no notification or coordination with the individual state's department of homeland security or local law enforcement, contrary to 8 U.S.C. § 1522. As a result, New Jersey is left to depend upon the broken federal monitoring system described by the FBI director to ensure that a person placed here is not a threat to our residents.

This past September, a 21 year-old New Jersey man pled guilty to charges of conspiring to provide material support and resources to ISIS, in a plot with three other men who are also facing federal terrorism charges. Of course, New Jersey borders New York, which continues to be a prime target of ISIS and other Islamist terrorists.

I urge you to halt your plans to accept more Syrian refugees in the United States. I have no doubt that ISIS will try to exploit American humanitarianism to expose Americans to similar deadly risk. Instead, the United States should channel the compassionate urge to protect innocent lives to encouraging our allies in the region to accept these refugees with our support.

I cannot allow New Jersey to participate in any program that will result in Syrian refugees – any one of whom could be connected to terrorism – being placed in our State. Effective today, I am directing the New Jersey Department of Human Services not to participate in the resettlement of any Syrian refugees in the State of New Jersey, and am requesting that all nongovernmental organizations assisting with the resettlement of refugees in New Jersey notify the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness and Department of Human Services of their placement of any refugees from Syria. And I urge you, as President, to halt our plans to allow Syrians to be resettled anywhere in the United States. Neither you nor any federal official can guarantee that Syrian refugees will not be part of any terroristic activity. As such, opening our door to them irresponsibly exposes our fellow Americans to unacceptable peril.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Christie", with a small number "2" written at the end of the signature.

Chris Christie
Governor

cc: International Rescue Committee
Church World Service
Catholic Charities of Camden