

Governor Roy Cooper
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

December 9, 2019

Dear Governor Cooper,

As evangelical Christians from throughout the state of North Carolina, we're writing to urge you to allow refugees to continue to be resettled to North Carolina through the U.S. refugee admissions program. Under an executive order signed by President Trump in September, resettlement will happen only in states and localities whose leaders provide written consent to allow refugees to be resettled in the state/locality. North Carolina evangelical churches and ministries have been active in serving newly arrived refugees for decades, and we pray you will not restrict this opportunity for ministry.

Over the past decade, roughly 21,300 individuals from various countries have been resettled in North Carolina. Many refugees resettled by the U.S. refugee resettlement program are Christians or other religious minorities who were persecuted for their faith in countries without our country's constitutional commitment to religious freedom. Others were persecuted for their political opposition to authoritarian regimes or because of their ethnicity. Regardless of their background, refugees are human beings made in God's image, with inherent dignity and potential, and we have been blessed by their arrival in North Carolina; we desire to continue to be able to extend love to these new neighbors as an exercise of our Christian faith.

Refugees resettled by the U.S. State Department are lawfully present in the U.S. from the moment of their arrival. Each one undergoes a thorough vetting process abroad before being approved for resettlement; in fact, the vetting process for refugees is the most thorough screening our federal government has for any category of immigrant or visitor coming to the U.S.. The vetting process is remarkably successful: since the Refugee Act of 1980, no refugee resettled to the U.S. has taken a single American life in an act of terrorism. We can be secure and compassionate in welcoming refugees.

Refugees also play an important role in North Carolina's economy. With a remarkably low statewide unemployment rate of just 4.2%, labor shortages pose a significant threat to ongoing economic growth. Refugees are employment authorized from the day they arrive and are eager to embrace the dignity of work, a right that was generally denied them in the countries from which they came. Various studies have found that, in the long-term, refugees contribute significantly more in tax revenues than they cost taxpayers in the form of initial resettlement assistance or public benefits. Refugees also make significant contributions to local economies in that they have a particularly high rate of entrepreneurship, higher than other immigrants and the native-born population.

Furthermore, if refugees are no longer allowed to be resettled to North Carolina, it would disrupt the reunification of many families who have been waiting years to be reunited. Many refugees are resettled to North Carolina because they already have family members in the state. If North Carolina restricts their resettlement, many will likely exercise their lawful right to simply move to North Carolina immediately after being resettled in another state to join their family – but in

doing so, they will move away from vital employment assistance, language acquisition and cultural adjustment resources offered by their resettlement organization. Refugees can best integrate into the U.S. and quickly become financially self-sufficient when supported both by their family and by a local resettlement office.

As our state's governor, we urge you to keep the option open for local communities within North Carolina to continue to receive newly arrived refugees. As always, we are committed to praying for you as you lead our state.

Sincerely,

Rev. Spencer Bradford, Executive Director, Durham Congregations In Action
Rev. Dr. Mikael Broadway, Mt. Level Missionary Baptist Church, Durham
Rev. Matt Carr, Back Creek Church (Associate Reformed Presbyterian), Charlotte
Rev. Carter McNeese, Fairmont First Baptist
Rev. Anthony Rodriguez, Valley Hope Church, Swannanoa
Rev. Justin Simmons, Love Chapel Hill
Chuck Jacob, Senior Pastor, Church of the Good Shepherd, Durham
Craig Willingham, Pastor, Berry's Grove Baptist Church, Durham
Chris Workman, Church Pastor, The Point Church, Chapel Hill
Lucy Albert, Pastor, Church of the Good Shepherd, Davidson
David Amann, Pastor, Apex
Haley Austin, Waypoint Church, Chapel Hill
Rebekah Beerbower, United Methodist, Hickory
Lana Bihlmeyer, Alexander
Amanda Blosser, Christ Central Church, Durham
Kristin Boggs, High Point
Debra Booze, Novo, Greensboro
Jessica Bowers, Salem Baptist Church, Apex
Kristine Bramson, Trinity Park Church, Cary/Morrisville
John Bremer, Senior Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Charlotte
Rochelle Buchwald, Asheville
John Cabascango, Discovery Church, Clayton
Lucynda Caceres, Good Shepherd, Mooresville
Julia Camenisch, Director, Persona Grata Goods, Charlotte
Susan Carter, Waypoint Church, Durham
Dr. Elizabeth Christenson-Diver, Oak Church, Durham
Bethany Clark, Durham
Hank Cummings, Apostolic, Fayetteville
Ashlea Dalik, Durham
Carlye Daugird, CityWell United Methodist Church, Durham
Dash Daugird, Citywell, Durham
Ruth DeHoog, Christ Church Greensboro
Lisa DeMarco, Franklinton
Mary-Claire Derrickson, Waypoint Church, Durham
Ruston Dickens, Good Shepherd, Cornelius
Rebekah Dorris, Waypoint Church, Durham
Mary Dorris, City Church Asheville
Rachel Dossett, Durham World Relief

Michele Dudley, Founder, Fashion & Compassion, Charlotte
 David Dunderdale, Pastor, Blacknall Presbyterian Church, Durham
 Faith Edwards, Winston Salem
 Margaret Fannin, Good Shepherd Anglican Church, Davidson
 Marsha Fisher, Salem Baptist Church, Apex
 Tammy Flynt, Greensboro
 Timothy Foley, Durham
 William Garrard, Retired Clergy, St. Lukes United Methodist Church, Hickory
 Frances Garrard, St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Hickory
 Janne Gaub, Charlotte
 Angela Gentry, Garner
 Joseph Gonzales, Youth Pastor, Pineville Church, Charlotte
 Heather Green, Clemmons
 Jemma Grindstaff, Raleigh
 Michael Harris, High Point
 Melissa Hartnett, Southern Shores
 Caitlyn Hawkins, Imago Dei, Wake Forest
 Abigail Haydel, Monroe
 Renee Hayes, United Methodist, Trinity
 Jessica Herren, Imago Dei Church, Wake Forest
 Kelly Hill, High Point
 Aaron Horton, Senior Pastor, Pineville Church of the Nazarene, Charlotte
 Amanda Huitt, Emmaus - A Jesus Church, Cary
 James Humphrey, New City Church, Waxhaw
 Nicole Hyatt, Harrisburg
 Martha Hyman, Holy Trinity Anglican, Chapel Hill
 Murray Ingerham, Raleigh
 Clara Jennings, Winston-Salem
 Evan Jensen, Pastor, First Alliance Church, Franklin
 Sarah Jernigan, South Durham Church
 Christian Jernigan, Durham
 Diana Johnson, Raleigh
 Kara Kebu, Opportunity Services Manager, World Relief Triad, High Point
 Laurel Kepcke, Salem Baptist, Cary
 Debbie Kirkbride, Raleigh
 Megan Klingler, Durham
 Rachel Lambert, Providence Baptist Church, Wake Forest
 Jonathan Lane, Charlotte
 Rob Lathrop, Raleigh
 Sarah Lathrop, Raleigh
 Lauren Lee, Senior Warden of the Vestry, All Saints Church, Durham
 Viviana Lenis Galeano, Iglesia Bautista La Roca, Clayton
 Shaney Lipes, Teacher, Durham
 Joan F Long, Waypoint Baptist Church, Chapel Hill
 Curt Lowndes, Pastor, The Gathering Church, Durham
 Mia Malesovas, Summerfield
 Andre Mann, Pastor, Raleigh
 Tanner Marquis, College Director, Imago Dei Church, Raleigh
 Judy Massengill, Summit Apex, Cary

Selina Mate, Mentorship Coordinator, World Relief, Durham
Robert Mayer, Associate Professor of Theological Bibliography, Gordon-Conwell
Theological Seminary, Charlotte
Celina McGee, Point, Spring Lake
Leslie McNiece, St. Clement's Episcopal Church, Clemmons
Erin Miller, Blacknall Presbyterian, Durham
Brandy Milton, Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter, Belmont
Laura Morris, Hendersonville
Andrew Morris, Hendersonville Presbyterian Church
Erik Murphy, Niner Christan Life, Charlotte
Roger Neely, Pastor, The Summit Church, Creedmoor
Mary Overcash, Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral Raleigh NC, Raleigh
Sandy Paige, Friendly Hills Church, Greensboro
Anna Parnell, Emmaus, Cary/Raleigh
Jason Payne, Director of International Programs, Forest Hills Baptist Church, Raleigh
Amber Pearson, The Summit Church, Durham
John Pearson, Elder, The Summit Church, Durham
Ashlyn Perry, Waypoint Church, Durham
Jessica Pettigrew, First Baptist Church of Whitsett, Burlington
Rebecca Phillips, Refugee Minister, Kings Park International Church, Cary
April Ragan, Holy Trinity Episcopal, Greensboro
Abby Ratliff, Love Chapel Hill, Durham
Sarah Richardson, Greensboro
Carmin Roldán, Cary
Asia Rumsey, Durham
Patrick Ryan, Waypoint Church, Durham
Chris Schutte, Senior Pastor, All Saints Anglican, Durham
Aislyn Smith, Mercy Hill, Browns Summit
Gregory Soderberg, Apex
Beverly Spencer, Forest Hills Baptist, Raleigh
Raymond Steen, Good Shepherd Church, Huntersville
Brooklyn Stephens, Imago Dei Church, Wake Forest
Brooklyn Stephens, Imago Dei, Raleigh
Luke Stockdale, Discover Church, Franklin
Lorrey Thabet, Peace Church, Cary
Laura Vaughan, First Presbyterian Winston-Salem
Roxanna Vess, Arden
Victor Wallace, The Summit Church, Durham
Vickie Ward, Jamestown
Jack Warlick, Back Creek Presbyterian, Charlotte
Meredith Weatherman, Antioch Baptist Church, Durham
Sarah Weiner, Waypoint Church, Chapel Hill
Molly Welch, United Methodist Women, Trinity
Madeline Wieters, Chapel Hill
Kelsey Wiggs, Charlotte
Jennifer Williams, All Saints Church, Durham
Diane Wong, High Point
Dr. Jina Yoo, Waypoint Church, Chapel Hill
Samuel Zhu, Durham