

Governor Gavin Newsom
Office of the Governor
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

December 9, 2019

Dear Governor Newsom,

As evangelical Christians from throughout the state of California, we're writing to urge you to allow refugees to continue to be resettled to California 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. California evangelical churches and ministries have been active in serving newly arrived refugees for decades, and we pray you will not restrict the ability for us to love our global neighbors in this way.

Over the past decade, roughly 20,800 individuals from various countries have been resettled in California. 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 California; 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 California's economy. With a remarkably low statewide unemployment rate of just 4.0%, 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 California, it would disrupt the reunification of many families who have been waiting years to be reunited. Many refugees are resettled to *California* because they already have family members in the state. If California restricts their resettlement, many will likely exercise their lawful right to simply move to California immediately after being resettled in another state so as 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 California to continue to receive newly arrived refugees. As always, we are committed to praying for you as you lead our state.

Sincerely,

Rev. William Turner, Pastor, Northern California Church of the Nazarene, Mountain View
Rev. Daniel Johnson, Hilmar Covenant Church
Lori Adams-Brown, Associate Campus Pastor, Echo Church, Santa Clara
Naqibullah Alakozay, Tracy
Farah Alshiraida, Riverbank
Ashley Anderson, Director of Education Initiative, Trellis, Costa Mesa
Sarah Anderson, Sanctuary Bible, Marina
Shakib Asghary, Modesto
Abigail Atchison, Director of Outreach, Prism Church, Pasadena
Moises Bejarano, Spanish Pastor, Sunrise, Rancho Cucamonga
Charity Bernardes-Malahay, LCSW, Long Beach
Shelley Blackwell, Baywood-Los Osos
Eric Blumber, Pastor, Kairos Hollywood, Los Angeles
Anna Brady, Crosspoint, Modesto
Alex Brunt-Pluta, St. Basil's Coptic Orthodox Church, Encinitas
Steven Cabrillos, Pastor, Anthology Church of Studio City, Studio City
Elizabeth Carrasco, Petaluma Hillside Church of the Nazarene
Ila Casselberry, Deacon, Christ Church East Bay, Pleasant Hill
Kiera Chambers, Pastor, Branches Community, City of Shasta Lake
Paul Cho, Medical Student, Los Angeles
Mathew Cooper, Roseville
Michael Crane, Director, Radius Global, Ontario
Steven Crawford, Pastor, Prism Church, Pasadena
Caroline Crawford, Volunteer, KHC, Torrance
Alan Cross, Pastor, Petaluma Valley Baptist Church
Rob Dalrymple, Pastor, Grove Community Church, Shafter
Kassie Dantzler, Board Member, Palo Alto Vineyard Church
Lydia Dawson, On Ramps Covenant Church, Fresno
Sandy Ditewig, Spiritual Director, Santa Ana
Nancy Donat, US Area Director, One Collective, Fresno
Jeremy Dye, Dublin
Becca Ebenhoch, Modesto
Haley Falcioni, Children's Minister, Sunridge Community Church, Murrieta
Stephanie Fox, VisaliaNaz
Pam Franklin, Empire Church of the Brethren, Modesto
Becca Ghonim, Integration Manager, World Relief Sacramento
Joseph Ginder, Pastor, Long Beach Friends Church

Armando Gonzalez, Music & Worship Leader, West Valley Bible Church, Hemet
 Scott Grandi, Mission Trails Church, El Cajon
 Lauren Grego, KHC, Torrance
 Abby Gritter, Project Associate, Blue Forest Conservation, San Francisco
 Chad Halliburton, Pastor, Rock Harbor Church - Mission Viejo, Ladera Ranch
 Dana Hojsack, Parishioner, Church of the Nazarene, San Diego
 Gilbert Howard, Patterson
 Katherine Howlett, Friend, Society of Friends, San Clemente
 Wes Jang, Volunteer/Lay Leader, Crosspoint, Modesto
 DJ Jenkins, Pastor, Anthology Church of Studio City
 Sarah Johnson, Ontario
 Cecilee Jones, World Relief, Manteca
 Jeromie Jonez, Executive Pastor, Momentum Christian Church, Chula Vista
 Heather Kaiser, Citrus Heights
 Lorraine Kelley, ACNA, La Mesa
 Scott Kooiman, Modesto
 Judy Lawson, Los Angeles
 Jasmin Liu, Cru, Arcadia
 Jaclyn Anne Lorenzo, Ontario
 Marilyn Louie Sanchez, River Life Covenant Church, West Sacramento
 Ruth Mansi, Reality Carpinteria, Santa Barbara
 Peggy McAllister, ESL Director, Mariners Church, Irvine
 Tabitha McDuffee, La Quinta
 Wendy McMahan, Church Member and Volunteer, Rockharbor, Lake Forest
 Vince Medrano, Senior Pastor, Faith Community, San Diego
 Christy Nellis, Grace Brethren Long Beach
 Mony Neth, Crosspoint Community Church, Modesto
 Debra Neuman, Modesto
 Adam Olguin, Momentum Christian Church, Bonita
 Albert Padilla, Pastor, Visalia
 Jackie Parke, Vox, Fullerton
 Katy Partan, Modesto World Relief, Ripon
 Janee Pedersen, Brentwood
 Jennifer Perez, Mountainside Communion, Hacienda Heights
 Brittany Peters, Journey of Faith, Redondo Beach
 Margaret Plenert, Anaheim
 Mindy Plick, Pastor, Placentia Presbyterian Church, Fullerton
 Allison Priola, City Pastor, San Diego
 Omid Rasooli, San Leandro
 Joshua Ray, Worship Director, Elk Grove Bible Church, Sacramento
 Nancy Roberts, Church of the Nazarene, Glendora
 Kendall Rodriguez, Missions Pastor, Rockharbor Mission Viejo, Costa Mesa
 Wil Rogan, Associate Pastor, Grace Long Beach
 Eli Rubio, La Habra
 Ryan Ruppe, Lake Forest
 Camille Sauder, Ontario
 Yousif Sawa, Modesto
 Linda Sexton, Modesto
 Catherine Shearer, LWC Church, Pleasanton

Tom Sims, Senior Pastor, 4141 Ministries, CLOVIS
Colleen Smith, Harbor City Church, San Diego
Denys Snytskyi, Pastor, Hillsong, Los Angeles
Kelly Soifer, Free Methodist Church, Santa Barbara
Noah Starksen, Palo Cedro
Marilyn Stratton, Thrive Church, Elk Grove
Jaclyn Tidmarsh, Crosspoint Community Church, Modesto
Taryn Tillotson, Volunteer Leader, CrossPoint Community, Modesto
Kristen Vallecillo, Stockton Covenant Church, Stockton
Jackie Van Konynenburg, CrossPoint Community Church - Modesto
Jennifer Van Steenwyk, CrossPoint Community Church, Turlock
Rebecca Voight, World Relief Sacramento, Carmichael
Carolyn Wadsworth, Evangelical Free, Yorba Linda
Burton Wang, Trinity Church in Redlands, Beaumont
Jennifer Wehrli, Names, Rocklin
Michael Westwood, Tehachapi Mountain Vineyard, Tehchapi
Jesse Wheeler, EFC, Fremont
Sherri Whiteford, CrossPoint Community Church, Modesto
Jenni Williams, Sunridge Community Church, Temecula
Janet Wilson, Pasadena
Jennifer Wilson, Golden Hills Community Church, Brentwood
Barbara Winkler, Pastor, Cru, Pomona
Cheryl Zimmerman, Anaheim