

Governor Kim Reynolds  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
1007 East Grand Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50319

December 9, 2019

Dear Governor Reynolds,

As evangelical Christians from throughout the state of Iowa, we're writing to urge you to allow refugees to continue to be resettled to Iowa 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. Iowa 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 6,100 individuals from various countries have been resettled in Iowa. 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 Iowa; 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 Iowa's economy. With a remarkably low statewide unemployment rate of just 2.5%, 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 Iowa, it would disrupt the reunification of many families who have been waiting years to be reunited. Many refugees are resettled to Iowa because they already have family members in the state. If Iowa restricts their resettlement, many will likely exercise their lawful right to simply move to Iowa 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 Iowa to continue to receive newly arrived refugees. As always, we are committed to praying for you as you lead our state.

Sincerely,

Rev. Elizabeth Brown Hardeman, Pastor, Orange City  
Rev. Kurt Monroe, Senior Pastor, First Christian Reformed Church, Sioux Center  
Lori Abendroth, Revision Church, Des Moines  
Jana Adams, Trinity Reformed Church O.C., Orange City  
Rose Admiraal, Calvary Christian Reformed Church, Pella  
Julie Andersen, Trinity Reformed Church, Alton  
Murray Andersen, Trinity Church, Alton  
Fatima Arteaga, Hull  
LJ Asbury, Washington  
Christopher Assell, Elementary Ministry Leader, Orchard Hill Church, Cedar Falls  
Nicole Baart, Sioux Center  
Amanda Bahena, First Reformed Church, Sioux Center  
Heidi Barnum, Clive  
Kristin Bierma, Calvary CRC, Pella  
Frank Bulk, Pastor, Sioux Center  
Cipa Bulk, Sioux Center  
John Buntsma, Trinity Reformed Church, Orange City  
Cheryl Buntsma, Recformed, Orange City  
Karla Chestnut, Pastor, Cedar Falls  
Anita Cirulis, Trinity Reformed Church, Orange City  
Angel Clarey, Trinity Reformed Church, Forest City  
Melissa Crawford, Des Moines  
Bob De Boer, Pastor, Trinity Reformed Church, Orange City  
Fran De Haan, Calvary Christian Reformed Church, Pella  
Verlyn De Wit, Faith Christian Reformed Church, Sioux Center  
June De Wit, Faith Christian Reformed Church, Sioux Center  
Caylan DeLucia, Trinity Reformed, Orange City  
Martha Draayer, Northwestern College, Sioux Center  
Nancy Dykstra, Community Health Advocate, Hull  
Ardene Emmelkamp, Faith CRC Sioux Center  
Kenneth Emmelkamp, Faith CRC Sioux Center  
Kathy Gabel, American Reformed Church, Orange City  
Carlye Gomes, First Reformed Church, Sioux Center  
Cory Grimm, Pastor, American Reformed, Primghar  
Judy Hauswald, Sioux Center  
Isaac Heard, Trinity Church, Sioux Center  
Alecia Heard, Trinity Church, Sioux Center

Harold Heie, CASA of Sioux County, Orange City  
 Sarah Helleso, Program Director, Waterloo  
 Neidy Hess, Citylight Kids Site Manager, Citylight Church, Council Bluffs  
 Deanne Hoekstra, Hull  
 Anna Hoogeveen, Trinity RCA, Orange City  
 Debbie Hooyer, American Reformed, Sioux Center  
 Kristine Hoskinson, Cedar Falls  
 Laura Hoy, Waterloo  
 Jason Jackson, Pastor, Peace Reformed Church, Sioux City  
 Calvin and Sally Jongsma, Covenant Christian Reformed Church, Sioux Center  
 Hannah Jorgensen, Orange City  
 Ruth Kocisko, Faith Christian Reformed Church, Sioux Center  
 Joel Kok, Pastor, Covenant Christian Reformed Church, Sioux Center  
 Adam Kolosik, Student Ministries Director, IMN, Des Moines  
 Jessica Kraayenbrink, Sheldon  
 Carol Kramer, Sioux Center  
 Tabatha Lamb, Des Moines  
 Nancy Landhuis, Trinity Reformed Church, Orange City  
 John Lee, Senior Pastor, Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Sioux Center  
 Jason Lief, Associate Professor of Practical Theology, Northwestern College, Sioux  
 Center  
 Katelin Looney, Living Water Community Church, Orange City  
 Janice Luevano, Hull  
 Cheryl Mason, Iowa City Church of the Nazarene, Iowa City  
 Ben Mathew, Pastor, Anchor Community Church, Dubuque  
 Kevin McMahan, Associate Dean, Intercultural Development, Northwestern College /  
 American Reformed Church, Orange City  
 Karisa Meier, Badger  
 Selena Meinders, Body of Christ Church, Ames  
 Kevin Muyskens, Pastor, Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Sheldon  
 Dr. Christopher Nonhof, Elder, Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Orange City  
 Heather Nunnikhoven, Body of Christ Church, AMES  
 Karinne O'Ram, New Hope, Orange City  
 John Pfautz, Professor, Augustana College, Davenport  
 Anna Roorda, First Church of the Nazarene, Davenport  
 Laurie Russell, Des Moines  
 Nathaniel Ryan, Trinity Reformed, Orange City  
 Nathan Salinas, Sanctuary Community Church, Iowa City  
 Lucas Sander, American Reformed Church, Orange City  
 James Schaap, Christian Reformed Church of North America, Alton  
 Barbara Schaap, Elected official of Covenant CRC Sioux Center, Alton  
 Shannon Schreurs, Sheldon  
 Joya Schreurs, Immanuel CRC, Sheldon  
 Kathleen Schreurs, Sheldon  
 Alison Schutt, Trinity Reformed Church in Orange City, Alton  
 James Shannon, Bettendorf  
 Rachel Smart, Trinity, Orange City  
 Ashley Stanislav, Deacon, Trinity Church, Orange City  
 Joni Steenhoek, Gilbert

Erin Stover, Des Moines  
Morgan Swier, Trinity Church, Orange City  
Megan Tensen, Cedar Falls  
Rebecca Tervo, First Reformed Church, Sioux Center  
Sara Tolsma, American Reformed Church, Orange City  
Daniel Tolsma, Orange City  
Kim Van Es, Sioux Center  
Heather Van Itallie, Davenport  
Cory Van Sloten, Pastor, Lebanon Christian Reformed Church, Maurice  
Jason Van Wyk, Senior Pastor, Peace Reformed Church, Alton  
Joy Vanbeek, Calvary CRC, Pella  
Dale Vander Broek, Liberty Evangelical Free Church, Pella  
TJ Vreugdenhil, Trinity Reformed Church, Orange City  
Audrey Watne, Mennonite Church, Dows  
Jan Webber, Berean Baptist Church Pella  
Kim Westerholm, Faith Lutheran, Orange City  
Kirby Willats, Volunteer Youth Leader, Trinity Reformed, Orange City  
Katy Wilson, Presbyterian, Mason City  
Jenny Wood, Kelley  
Jeff Wood, Kelley