

Governor Mike DeWine  
Office of the Governor  
Riffe Center, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor, 77  
South High Street,  
Columbus, OH 43215

December 9, 2019

Dear Governor DeWine,

As evangelical Christians from throughout the state of Ohio, we're writing to urge you to allow refugees to continue to be resettled to Ohio 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. Ohio 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 24,400 individuals from various countries have been resettled in Ohio. 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 Ohio; 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 Ohio's economy. With a remarkably low statewide unemployment rate of just 4.1%, 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 nativeborn population.

Furthermore, if refugees are no longer allowed to be resettled to Ohio, it would disrupt the reunification of many families who have been waiting years to be reunited. Many refugees are resettled to *Ohio* because they already have family members in the state. If Ohio restricts their resettlement, many will likely exercise their lawful right to simply move to Ohio 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 Ohio to continue to receive newly arrived refugees. As always, we are committed to praying for you as you lead our state.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Juri Ammari, Refugee Minister, The Christian & Missionary Alliance, Cleveland  
Rev. Lynn Bozich Shetzer, Senior Pastor, PCUSA, North Canton  
Rev. Curtis Cecil, Senior Pastor, Nazarene, Jefferson  
Rev. Gregory Farra, Senior Pastor, Dresden Church of the Nazarene, Groveport  
Rev. Kelly Johnston, Church of the Nazarene, Hamilton  
Rev. Donald Poest, Brunswick  
Rev. Chris White, Presbyterian Church (USA), Norwood  
Rev. Robert Zimmermann, Senior Pastor, Westgate Chapel, Toledo  
Dr. Joe Coffey, Senior Pastor, Christ Community Chapel, Hudson  
Joe Abraham, Pastor, Scranton Road Bible Church, Cleveland  
Elizabeth Allen, Reynoldsburg  
Connie Anderson, Lay Leader, Vineyard Columbus  
Davin Anderson, Christ Community Chapel, Mantua  
Maria Arnaiz, President, Akron Interfaith Immigration Advocates  
Elizabeth Aronhalt, Akron  
Julie Aspiras, Cuyahoga Falls  
William Babione, Athletes in Action, Xenia  
Janet Ballard, Westerville Church of the Nazarene, Gahanna  
Meg Beech, Xenos Christian Fellowship, Columbus  
Jennifer Berlyoung, Pastor of Community Development, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Green  
DeNica Bishop, Elder, Span Ministries, Akron  
Chris Boeyink, Senior Pastor, Cru, Defiance  
John Boggs, Mount Vernon  
Jessie Boggs, Mount Vernon  
Kerrie Book, Director of Family Ministries, Hudson UMC, Akron  
Kayla Bosworth, Woodstock  
Christina Brayton, Columbus  
Ben Bricker, Rivertree Lake, North Canton  
Kylie Bricker, Rivertree Lake, North Canton  
Robert Brown, Campus Pastor, Be Hope Church, Ironton

Renee Buchan, Westerville  
Heidi Burns, Columbus  
Melanie Busch, Andover  
Meghan Cahill, Awaken Church, Columbus  
Bill Christensen, International Ministries Pastor, Vineyard Church of Columbus,  
Westerville  
Sharon Collier, Akron  
Jason Cox, Worship Pastor, Grace Bible Church of Akron, Barberton  
Sara Cronbaugh, Kent  
Cynthia Cusson, Centerville Christian Fellowship, Waynesville  
Andrea Cuyler, Elder, Altered Church, Painesville  
Jessica Daughton, Worthington  
Mary Davis, Rock of Grace Kinsman, Youngstown  
Krystin Dillon, Be Hope Church/Be Hope Immigration Center, Wilmington  
Cary Duckett, Senior Pastor, Grace Bible Church, New Franklin  
Kristin Edgar, High School Ministry Leader, Xenos Christian Fellowship, Columbus  
Lester Elgin III, Grace Bible Church, New Franklin  
Alyssa Evans, Pastor, Be Hope Church, Dayton  
Christine Farley, Toledo  
Scott Fausneacht, Elder, Grace Bible Church, Norton  
Mark Fertig, Westgate Chapel, Toledo  
Cory Fetzer, Youth Pastor, Shadetree Community Church, Mentor  
Keith Fisher, Toledo  
Ann Fisher, Toledo  
Katie Fulmer, North Terrace Church of Christ, Zanesville  
Matthew Garrett, Dayton  
Maria Ivonne Gerard Roldan, Chesterland  
Jordan Gerber, Radial Church, Canton  
Teresa Gibson, Xenos Christian Fellowship, Columbus  
Linda Goeke, Hudson  
Catherine Gossman, Deacon, Xenos, Clintonville  
Sarah Grogan, Cincinnati  
Brendan Haggerty, Executive Director, Legacies of Success, Akron  
Karen Hay, Christ community chapel, Hudson  
Amy Heckman, Shepherd Church of the Nazarene, Pataskala  
Lucas Hershberger, The Church at Carter's Orchard, New Philadelphia  
Sarah Hertzler, Missions Director, Awaken Church, Columbus  
Matthew Hicks, Deacon, Grace Bible Church, New Franklin  
Dr. Jona Hilario, Refugee Ministry Leader, Columbus  
Aaron Hill, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Beaver Creek  
Shaina Horner, Worship Leader, Vineyard, Norwood  
Chris Hoxworth, Elder, Grace Bible Church, New Franklin  
John Hrivnak, Grace Bible Church, Akron  
Abby Hudson, Westerville  
Stephen Humphreys, Pastor of Spiritual Development, Grace Bible Church,  
New Franklin  
Julianne Judge, Outreach Director, Westgate Chapel, Toledo  
Corinthia Kidd, Oxford  
Brittany King, Harrod United Methodist Church, Plain City

Heather Knapp, New Wine Covenant Community, Centerburg  
Sheena Kramer, First Baptist Church Massillon  
Dennis Lambes, Elder, Grace Bible Church, Canal Fulton  
Marisa Lapish, Following Christ International, Madison  
Sam Lapish, Following Christ International, Rome  
Caroline Lapish, Madison  
Heather Leslie, X Church, Lancaster  
Jessica Malik, Columbus  
Brandon Marlow, Broadview Rd Church of Christ, Parma  
Cynthia Mathias, International Welcome Center, New Franklin  
Brian Metzger, Cru Cleveland & NE Ohio, Cleveland Heights  
Wendy Miller, Painesville  
Nikki Mills, Columbus  
Sue Moroney, Parkside Church Green, North Canton  
Rich Nathan, Senior Pastor, Vineyard Columbus, Westerville  
Alyse Nevil, Finance Manager, Following Christ International, Ashtabula  
Paul Nichols, ANCF, Columbus  
Natina Ohmart, Cleveland  
Carl Olson, Elder, Citizens Akron  
Dr. Lori Packard, Mason  
Thompson Paisley, Akron  
Georgi Persons, Blue Ocean Faith Columbus, Galena  
Beth Piwkowski, Parkside Church Westside, Cleveland  
Kiesha Plaskett, Associate Campus Pastor, Be Hope Church of the Nazarene,  
Beavercreek  
Logan Price, Wooster  
Catherine Prichard, Life Spring, New Paris  
Miriam Ray, CCC, Tallmadge  
Deb Robison, Individual, Norwood  
Heather Rogers, Be Hope Church, Beavercreek  
Adam Romans, Pastor, North Canton  
Linda Roth, Nazarene, Toledo  
Christa Runion, Christ Community Chapel, Highland Square, Kent  
Andrew Saperstein, Pastor of Leader Formation, Vineyard Church of Columbus  
Brenda Sarsany, RiverTree Jackson, Massillon  
Doug Schaefer, Hilliard  
Brandon Schmidt, Pastor, Massillon  
Adam Schmidt, First Friends Canton, Massillon  
Sharon Schuldt, Lakewood Congregational, Lakewood  
Hannah Scruggs, Be Hope Church, Fairborn  
Elaine Shafer, Cincinnati  
Darwin Shieh, All Nations Christian Fellowship, Westerville  
Molly Slone, Be Hope Immigration Center, Dayton  
Julie Sparks, Pickerington  
Hank Spaulding, Adjunct Professor of Christian Ethics, Church of the Nazarene,  
Mount Vernon  
Christina Staats, Mobilizer/Missionary, Evangelical Immigration Table, Stow

Mark Staats, Stow  
Maria Staats, Riverview, Stow  
Joshua Stoxen, Pastor, Vineyard Central, Norwood  
Eric Stucki, FBC Massillon  
Angel Subisak, All Nations Christian Fellowship, Bexley  
Danielle Taufiq, Columbus  
William Taylor, Pastor, CityView Baptist Church, Cleveland  
Andrew Taylor, CityView Baptist Church, Cleveland  
Melissa Thomas, Christ the King, Cincinnati  
Hope Thomas, Old North Church of Canfield, North Lima  
Cathy Thompson, Be Hope Church, Xenia  
Audra Tipton, Gateway Church, New Franklin  
Dean Van Farowe, Senior Pastor, Calvary Reformed Church, Cleveland  
Tara Van Ho, Euclid  
Nathan Van Twisk, North Canton  
Kevin Vereide, Columbus  
Cathy Wagers, Communications Administrative Assistant, Grace Bible Church,  
New Franklin  
Sherry Walter, All Nations Christian Fellowship, Hilliard  
Stephen Watkins, Alpha Community Church of the Nazarene, Dayton  
Faye Wells, Connection Church/Assembly of God, Creston  
Rebecca Wiggins, Stonybrook Methodist, Columbus  
Matthew Winfrey, Vineyard Columbus, Westerville  
Matt Winfrey, Vineyard Columbus, Westerville  
Joyce Young, First Baptist, Elyria  
Abby Zerull, Citizens Akron