



KATE BROWN
Governor

December 16, 2019

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington DC, 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

Let me be clear from the outset: Oregon is a sanctuary state. The State of Oregon consents and will continue to welcome the resettlement of refugees in our communities.

Further, I am writing to express the State of Oregon's opposition to President Trump's September 26th Executive Order on refugee resettlement, and ask that you return this year's refugee admission number to previous annual levels. The values reflected in this Executive Order are not the values on which our country was built.

It is a sad day for a nation founded on the principle of welcoming "poor, tired, and huddled masses." Nobody chooses to be a refugee. Refugees are just like us. They have jobs and families. They are parents and friends, teachers and doctors, farmers and fishermen. Since 1975, Oregon has resettled 67,743 refugees. Refugees contribute every day to the strength of our economy, our communities, and our culture. About 70 percent of refugees find employment within the first few months of resettlement. They pay taxes, buy homes, and open businesses. Their search for freedom and a better future for themselves and their children embodies what it means to be an American.

Resettlement is a lifeline that our country provides for the world's most vulnerable refugees. Refugee resettlement is not a free pass to another country. These are people who cannot return home because they fear for their lives and their families. Presidents as different as John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan believed this country was meant to be a shining "city upon a hill," echoing the words of the Massachusetts Bay settlers—some of the very first immigrants to these shores, searching for freedom from religious persecution.

I ask you: what example do we set today, with all the eyes of the world on us?



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This Executive Order is the latest in a long line of attacks against immigrant and refugee communities by this Administration. From the Muslim Ban of 2017 to family separation and this most recent Executive Order, this Administration has time and time again violated our nation's commitment to welcome those who yearn to breathe free.

This Executive Order sets new requirements for states and local jurisdictions to provide written consent to receive new refugees for resettlement. We reserve the right to challenge this requirement in the future, but I will not wait for the legality of this Executive Order to be decided by the U.S. district courts.

Please receive this letter as written consent to ensure uninterrupted refugee resettlement in the State of Oregon, and expect to receive additional letters from our local counties.

To put it more simply: refugees are welcome here.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Brown" with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Governor Kate Brown

KB:sc

cc: Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Carol T. O'Connell
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
U.S. Department of State