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DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON  
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VICE-CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON  
THE BUDGET

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November 30, 2015

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-305, The Capitol

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

We write to express our strong support for prohibiting funds made available by an upcoming omnibus spending bill from being used by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (hereinafter ORR) for purposes of resettling, integrating, and providing other services for refugees, asylum seekers, or aliens not lawfully admitted and approved for lawful status for a period of six months.

The Administration recently announced its intent to resettle an additional 10,000 Syrian refugees in the U.S. in FY2016. Given the recent terror attacks in Paris and threats from the Islamic State (hereinafter ISIS), we suspect terrorists are actively trying to exploit our refugee program in order to infiltrate the United States. More importantly, “The FBI, intelligence community, and Homeland Security officials have all testified to the House Committee that they “don’t know who these people are (referring to Syrian refugees)” according to Chairman McCaul of the Homeland Security Committee.<sup>1</sup> Senators Sessions and Shelby just released a list of twelve refugees (not exclusive to Syria) released into the U.S. in 2015 who were publicly implicated in terrorism. It would be irresponsible to continue resettling refugees given the clear and present danger posed by terrorists to the homeland.

In addition, we submit that no funding should be provided for other ORR resettlement services. ORR has been directly involved in the unlawful resettlement of thousands of illegal aliens

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Boland, *Homeland Sec. Chairman: ISIS will use refugee crisis to infiltrate west*, Washington Examiner, September 13, 2015.

crossing our Southern border over the past few years, **another vulnerability ISIS has pledged to exploit**. The Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety was recently asked whether Islamic State terrorists had infiltrated the Southern border. He responded, “*Individuals that come across the Texas/Mexican border from countries with a known terrorism presence and the answer to that is yes.*”<sup>2</sup> In April, a Judicial Watch report cited a Mexican Army officer and police inspector who asserted that ISIS was operating training bases in close proximity of the U.S. Southern border.<sup>3</sup> Another report from August 2014 advised that social media traffic indicated ISIS was planning to “infiltrate” the Southern border in order to carry out a terrorist attack.<sup>4</sup> Further, the Homeland Security Department recently confirmed that eight Syrians, traveling in two family units, were taken into custody at the border in the Laredo sector. Six Syrians with fake passports were also arrested in Honduras.

The direct threat posed by ISIS is compounded by ORR’s lack of transparency and competence. Section 413(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to submit an annual report to Congress regarding the activities of ORR “no later than the January 31 following the end of each fiscal year...” **ORR’s FY2014 report is still outstanding**. The annual reports contain important information about “refugee placement”, “ORR refugee health initiatives”, and “discretionary grants...”

ORR’s resettlement services must be temporarily suspended. This will allow our government to develop sufficient vetting protocols for overseas refugees, illegal aliens or asylum seekers crossing our Southern border. Moreover, ORR must produce its FY2014 Annual Report to Congress, as required by law, and take other steps to assure Members of this body that it will operate with transparency moving forward. ORR’s activities are costing hardworking American taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars and potentially endangering the security of our country.


Thank you for your consideration of our views on these matters.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn  
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Lamar Smith  
Member of Congress


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<sup>2</sup> Kellan Howell, *Texas top cop: Islamic State terrorist might cross southern border*. Washington Times, October 6, 2015. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/oct/6/steven-mccraw-texas-top-cop-islamic-state-terroris/>

<sup>3</sup> Edmund DeMarche, *ISIS operating base few miles from Texas border, group warns*. Fox News, April 16, 2015. <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/04/16/isis-reportedly-operating-base-few-miles-from-texas-border/>

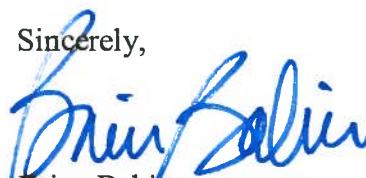
<sup>4</sup> Jana Winter, *Online Posts Show ISIS Eyeing Mexican Border, says law enforcement bulletin*. FoxNews, August 29, 2014. <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/08/29/online-posts-show-isis-eyeing-mexican-border-says-law-enforcement-bulletin/>

Sincerely,



Jim Bridenstine  
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Brian Babin  
Member of Congress