



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

President Barack H. Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

November 4, 2016

Dear President Obama:

I am writing to inform you that the State of Maine is hereby withdrawing from the Refugee Resettlement Program. This letter serves as notice to Office of Refugee Resettlement Director Bob Carey, copied, as required by 45 C.F.R. § 200.301(a).

I have lost confidence in the federal government's ability to safely and responsibly run the refugee program and no longer want the State of Maine associated with that shortcoming. The federal vetting system has proven wholly inadequate, as evidenced by the recent revelation that a refugee living in Freeport, Maine returned to Syria and died fighting for the ISIS terrorist organization. This is not the only example of a terrorist-linked refugee having lived in Maine.

Whether the federal government grants refugee status to a current terrorist or to somebody who is susceptible to radicalization by virtue of their having come from a nation that either supports or is overcome by terrorism, it is a failure to properly vet entrants and it puts American lives at risk.

Furthermore, Maine's social services, schools, infrastructure, and other resources are being burdened by this unchecked influx of refugees on top of the countless other immigrants crossing our borders and flouting our laws with impunity. We have also found that welfare fraud is especially prevalent within the refugee community.

The federal government has proven to be an unwilling partner with states in ensuring that refugee resettlement does not unduly put American lives at risk. Multiple states, including Texas and Kansas, have petitioned the federal government for more information about refugee placement in their states, only to be refused.

The federal government has also indicated in recent communication to my office that it intends to *increase* its intake of Syrian and other refugees next year, all without improving its vetting process. I sincerely hope that the federal government will re-evaluate its current refugee policy—both the quantity and nation of origin of refugees it resettles and the vetting process they are subjected to—in order to best protect the safety and interests of the American people.

I have directed Maine's Department of Health and Human Services to work with the Office of Refugee Resettlement to implement Maine's withdrawal from the program.



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul R. LePage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "P".

Paul R. LePage
Governor of Maine

CC: Bob Carey, Director, Office of Refugee Resettlement
Mary Mayhew, Commissioner, Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Sylvia Burwell, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services