

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As leaders in our communities and elected officials at all levels of state and local government, we write today to express our strong support for protecting and resettling refugees in the United States. **We call on your Administration to meet its commitment to resettle refugees in Fiscal Year 2023 and to prioritize restoring our nation's refugee resettlement infrastructure to ensure we achieve that goal.**

Refugee resettlement is not only a lifeline for refugees, but it also invigorates our communities—strengthening our economies and civic institutions. We urge you to consider the voices of elected leaders across the country as we join together in support of this life-saving program. As our experience with the evacuation of at-risk Afghans and our response to the war in Ukraine has laid bare, preserving and investing in refugee resettlement is key in order to effectively and humanely respond to emergency refugee situations, as well as continue U.S. leadership to protect those caught in protracted conflict across the globe.

The international community faces a forced migration crisis of historic proportions that requires bold leadership, innovative solutions, and all countries to do their fair share. The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) recently reported that an unprecedented 100 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide, 42 percent of which are children. Among them, UNHCR estimates that 2 million refugees need access to resettlement this year. Despite this, less than one percent are afforded this chance.

As a record-breaking refugee crisis unfolds globally, we have a chance to affirm U.S. leadership and our commitments to the world and to this nation by welcoming refugees into our communities. As elected leaders, we continually hear from our constituents that they support refugee resettlement. From greeting refugee families at the airport to assisting with English language classes or navigating bus lines, our communities stand for welcome. They know that refugees were forced to flee in order to save their lives and are now looking for a place to be safe and call home again.

In FY 2021, the United States resettled 11,411 refugees, the lowest in any year on record. We applauded your action to increase the refugee admissions goal to 125,000 for FY 2022, but we

are disappointingly on pace to reach less than 20 percent of that number. Resettlement offers refugees an important *permanent* pathway to safety. The recent pivot by the United States towards offering temporary pathways over resettlement, as we observed in the U.S. evacuation of Afghans for example, is the direct result of an underfunded resettlement process that cannot adequately scale-up during emergencies.

We can and must do more. Our communities stand ready to welcome refugees in need. We are calling on your administration to double down on the investment of resources necessary to rebuild the resettlement program to welcome more refugees this upcoming fiscal year.

Refugees bring immense value to our communities. They invigorate our economies, bring innovation to our towns, and make our public and cultural institutions richer. Refugees are students, business owners, dedicated employees, customers, elected officials, and community leaders. In every way, they embody what it means to be an American.

We are better and stronger because of refugees and their families. As state and local elected officials, we call on you to restore our nation's standing as a leader in welcoming refugees by ensuring adequate resources are made available to restore the resettlement program and ensure we meet the FY 2023 resettlement goal.

We hope that you will take into account our strong desire to welcome refugees as you make your determination.

Sincerely,



Mayor

City of Dubuque