

Dear _____,

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of _____. I am a volunteer with International House, an internationally minded non-profit organization that supports immigrants in Mecklenburg and surrounding counties. I believe our community thrives because we welcome a high quality of life for its residents, reducing barriers and enabling participation for all participants, including immigrants and refugees. Protected access to a welcoming community in the United States is a strong American legacy that ensures that the most vulnerable have a safe place to call home. **I am writing to express concern about the current pause of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program.**

Ever since the United States Refugee Act passed with broad bipartisan support in 1980, Congress has played a vital role in supporting the U.S. refugee program, including by meaningfully consulting with the administration on annual refugee admissions targets as required by law. Through pro-refugee legislation, funding, and oversight, the refugee program will remain a lifesaving pillar of global humanitarian efforts and a boon to U.S. national security and foreign policy.

Refugee resettlement in particular strengthens national security and supports geopolitical stability and peace – and refugees resettled in the United States contribute to our nation's economic growth and revitalize communities. Refugees pay taxes, open businesses, buy homes, and utilize their expertise, skills, inventive ideas and resilience. Refugees contributed \$581 billion to the American economy over the last 15 years, including an estimated \$363 billion in federal taxes and \$218 billion to state and local governments. They also become proud American citizens and voters, with many being elected to public office. Refugees are resilient, hard workers whose innovative skills have contributed greatly to the whole of our state.

International House supports refugees and immigrants in Charlotte in a myriad of ways. In 2023, 9 out of 10 participants in our ESL programs maintained or increased their English skills. 974 people engaged in an Intercultural Experience at International House through foreign language conversation clubs, book clubs, young professional groups and social gatherings. We helped 101 people obtain their green cards and become active working members of our economy. 182 people participated in our Cultural Sensitivity Trainings, providing vital information and skills to better support those with limited English proficiency. We have proudly supported our community for over 40 years, but we cannot do this work alone. I ask you to consider such programs as ours that protect every person's dignity, governed by core humanitarian principles and grounded in values of hospitality, compassion, and welcome. It is our collective responsibility as Americans.

I call on you _____ to please ask Reps. Mike Johnson and Steve Scalise / Senators Chuck Grassley and John Thune to work with the Administration to reinstate the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program. You are also invited anytime to visit International House to meet many of these resilient constituents of which I speak. Your support means a lot for me and your community. Thank you.

Sincerely,