



December 19, 2019

Dear President Trump,

We write to express our appreciation for enhancing security screenings for refugees admitted through the United States Refugee Admissions Program and giving states more of a voice in the process.

This program has attracted national attention in recent years. In 2015, a bipartisan group of Governors from across the nation asked the Obama Administration during a White House conference call to strengthen security checks for refugees entering America. President Obama refused to work with the states.

Thanks to your leadership, Americans can be confident once again in the screening process for refugees entering the United States. We applaud the recent steps taken by the White House and State Department at your direction to strengthen vetting of refugees. This provides much-needed assurance about the program's integrity to the communities welcoming refugees in our states. These steps include:

- Giving refugee adjudicators more time to screen applicants.
- Allowing refugee adjudicators more latitude to deny refugee applications.
- Collecting more data fields on refugee applicants and extending the lookback period on data collection.
- Using additional databases to deepen the vetting process.
- Implementing social media checks.

Additionally, we appreciate the closure of the "follow-on" loophole that allowed family members of previously approved refugees to circumvent some screenings. We also believe that the fraud screenings being conducted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services have great value, and we encourage you to consider expanding this program.

We also want to note that your administration is using many other additional tools to vet refugees, but that some of these are classified and will not be detailed here.

Since September 11, 2001, our country has worked to strengthen security across the board, and closing loopholes in vetting for our immigration system is key to achieving this goal. We urge your continued focus on strengthening security checks and putting the security of Americans first.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kim Reynolds in black ink.

Kim Reynolds
Governor of Iowa

Handwritten signature of Pete Ricketts in black ink.

Pete Ricketts
Governor of Nebraska

Handwritten signature of Kristi Noem in black ink.

Kristi Noem
Governor of South Dakota