



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

November 16, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

As governor of Texas, I write to inform you that the State of Texas will not accept any refugees from Syria in the wake of the deadly terrorist attack in Paris.

Further, I — and millions of Americans — implore you to halt your plans to accept more Syrian refugees in the United States. A Syrian “refugee” appears to have been part of the Paris terror attack. American humanitarian compassion could be exploited to expose Americans to similar deadly danger. The reasons for such concerns are plentiful.

The FBI director testified to Congress that the federal government does not have the background information that is necessary to effectively conduct proper security checks on Syrian nationals. Director Comey explained: “We can query our database until the cows come home, but there will be nothing show up because we have no record of them.”

The threat posed to Texas by ISIS is very real. ISIS claimed credit last May when two terrorist gunmen launched an attack in Garland, Texas. Less than two weeks later, the FBI arrested an Iraqi-born man in North Texas and charged him with lying to federal agents about traveling to Syria to fight with ISIS. And in 2014, when I served as Texas attorney general, we participated in a Joint Terrorism Task Force that arrested two Austin residents for providing material support to terrorists — including ISIS.

Given the tragic attack in Paris and the threats we have already seen in Texas, coupled with the FBI director’s acknowledgment that we do not have the information necessary to effectively vet Syrian nationals, Texas cannot participate in any program that will result in Syrian refugees — any one of whom could be connected to terrorism — being resettled in Texas.

Effective today, I am directing the Texas Health & Human Services Commission’s Refugee Resettlement Program to not participate in the resettlement of any Syrian refugees in the State of Texas. And I urge you, as president, to halt your plans to allow Syrians to be resettled anywhere in the United States. Neither you nor any federal official can guarantee that Syrian refugees will not be part of any terroristic activity. As such, opening our door to them irresponsibly exposes our fellow Americans to unacceptable peril.

Respectfully,

  
Greg Abbott  
Governor