

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 606 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY STEPHENS, COX, QUIGLEY, BAKER, MILLARD, MURT,
HEFFLEY, PHILLIPS-HILL, LONGIETTI, VEREB, DAY, MACKENZIE,
BENNINGHOFF, HICKERNELL, DUSH, SONNEY, CORBIN, HARPER,
READSHAW, GODSHALL, FEE, HARHART, FARRY, KAUFFMAN, HAHN,
R. BROWN, WARNER, RAPP, MARSICO, TAYLOR, MARSHALL, A. HARRIS,
SANKEY, TALLMAN, ELLIS, SCHLEGEL CULVER, D. COSTA, GROVE AND
GINGRICH, DECEMBER 1, 2015

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 1, 2015

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Governor to reconsider the resettlement of Syrian
2 refugees in this Commonwealth until such time as systems are
3 in place to thoroughly conduct security and background checks
4 on Syrian refugees.

5 WHEREAS, In order to address the migrant crisis in Syria, the
6 Federal Government has indicated that the United States will
7 accept at least 10,000 Syrian refugees during fiscal year 2016;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has an abundant and
10 successful history of embracing immigrants; and

11 WHEREAS, The most important responsibility of government is
12 to protect the safety and security of the residents of the
13 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and

14 WHEREAS, On November 13, 2015, coordinated terror attacks
15 were carried out in Paris, France, killing at least 129 people
16 and injuring more than 350 people; and

1 WHEREAS, On November 14, 2015, the Islamic State (ISIS), a
2 deadly terrorist organization based in Raqqa, Syria, claimed
3 responsibility for the attacks and pledged further attacks
4 worldwide; and

5 WHEREAS, According to French police, a Syrian passport
6 belonging to a Syrian asylum seeker who entered Europe through
7 Greece was found near the body of one suicide bomber; and

8 WHEREAS, This raises concerns that the security vetting
9 procedures used in addressing the Syrian migrant crisis are
10 inadequate; and

11 WHEREAS, On February 11, 2015, Francis X. Taylor, Under
12 Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis for the United States
13 Department of Homeland Security, stated, "We are concerned about
14 any group of people coming to the United States who may be
15 coming to the United States for nefarious purposes"; and

16 WHEREAS, Under Secretary Taylor further testified that
17 officials "want to make sure that if we are asked to vet
18 individuals from any part of the world to come to the United
19 States, that we have applied the most rigorous screening that's
20 available within the U.S. government"; and

21 WHEREAS, On February 11, 2015, Nicholas J. Rasmussen,
22 Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, testified in
23 front of the United States House of Representatives' Committee
24 on Homeland Security that Syrian refugees are:

25 clearly a population of concern and, as Under Secretary
26 Taylor said, what we want to be able to do is apply the
27 full weight of U.S. intelligence community holdings to
28 the vetting and screening process so that we can unearth
29 any information that we may have in our holdings that
30 gives us concern about particular individuals;

31 and

32 WHEREAS, On February 11, 2015, Michael B. Steinbach,

1 Assistant Director, Counterterrorism Division, Federal Bureau of
2 Investigation, testified in front of the United States House of
3 Representatives' Committee on Homeland Security that:

4 You have to have information to vet, so the concern in
5 Syria is that we don't have systems in place on the
6 ground to collect the information to vet. That would be
7 the concern we would be vetting--databases don't hold the
8 information on those individuals, and that is the
9 concern;

10 and

11 WHEREAS, Increased security measures are necessary following
12 the recent terror attacks in order to protect the security,
13 safety and basic freedoms of the residents of this Commonwealth;
14 therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the Governor
16 to reconsider the resettlement of Syrian refugees in this
17 Commonwealth until such time as systems are in place to
18 thoroughly conduct security and background checks on Syrian
19 refugees; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to
21 the Governor.