



**BRIDGE**  
REFUGEE SERVICES, INC.  
DIGNITY • HOPE • OPPORTUNITY

January 29, 2017

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Members of the Refugee Community:

We are America: a country of freedom, democracy and equality that prides itself in offering protection and safety to those who flee persecution and injustice. For many years, our welcoming communities have actively engaged in integrating refugees and accompanying them on their journey to self-sufficiency. Even as we face challenging times, our staff and Board of Directors remain committed to our core values: preserving human dignity and welcoming the stranger.

The Presidential Executive Order signed by President Trump on January 27, will seriously impede our resettlement program, affecting more than 400 refugees who were resettled by Bridge Refugee Services in Knoxville and Chattanooga during the past year and hundreds and hundreds more who are still figuring out everyday challenges of their new life in a new country and depend on Bridge for ongoing guidance.

This decision will also directly affect families and individuals who were previously vetted, approved, and scheduled to arrive here in February, disrupting their lives and shattering their dreams. It will continue to separate families from their loved ones and will put family members trapped in refugee camps in harm's way with no hope to escape, and no hope for their future.

A widow from Iraq who fled the war-torn country in 2012, will be prevented from finally reuniting with her son and her grandchildren, all of whom were schedule to arrive in Tennessee next week. The Executive Order will also rob three little girls, whose parents fled war in 2004 and waited 12 years to come to US, of opportunity for peace and safety; they would have arrived here in mid-February. These refugees, and many more like them, have been vetted for years, they have done all that was required of them, and they had dreams of building a new life as self-sufficient, contributing members of welcoming communities. Because of the Executive Order, they are left afraid, uncertain of where their life will lead.


United we must stand, together in the face of this Executive Order. We cannot allow irrational fears within the President's office to guide decisions being made about people who are fleeing to save their lives and those of their children.

We invite you to join with us in raising your voice in protest and action. Support refugees and the communities that welcome them by:

1. signing petitions to President Trump, or sending e-mail to him at the White House, asking him to retract the Executive order affecting refugees. A petition can be found at

<http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/do-not-stop-refugee-resettle?source=c.tw&rbid=17624300>, and the White House page to "Send a Message to the White House" can be found at [www.whitehouse.gov/contact](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact).

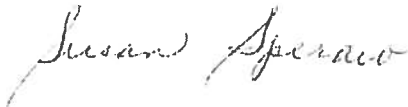
2. sending e-mails to your U.S. senators (in Tennessee Senator Bob Corker at [www.corker.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/emailme](http://www.corker.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/emailme), and Senator Lamar Alexander at [www.alexander.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email](http://www.alexander.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email))
3. contacting your US Congressman, voicing your disapproval of the Executive Order and asking for it to be rescinded. You can find your congressman's name and contact information at the following website at [www.house.gov/htbin/findrep](http://www.house.gov/htbin/findrep).
4. donating funds to Bridge Refugee Services to ensure that we can provide uninterrupted support to refugees who recently arrived, so that we can help them achieve self-sufficiency and complete their transition to American life. To help us keep our doors open as long as possible, donate at [www.bridgerefugees.org](http://www.bridgerefugees.org).
5. offering comfort and encouragement to refugees you know in this time of despair and anguish



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