



STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
ATLANTA 30334-0900

Nathan Deal
GOVERNOR

November 16, 2015

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

Dear President Obama:

In light of the terrorist attacks in Paris, I wish to address with you concerns regarding refugee resettlement. As you know, since 2012, my Administration has worked to restrict the number of refugees sent by the federal government to resettle in Georgia in order to safeguard the security of Georgians and the state's valuable limited resources, an effort that now has attained heightened importance. While we have empathy for the hardships that innocent Syrian people face, the terrorist attacks in Paris raise a need for additional scrutiny of those claiming refugee status.

As I am sure you are aware, recent reports indicate that at least one of the suicide bombers involved in Friday's tragedy made his way to Europe from Syria under claim of political refugee status. This, I fear, is reflective of a broader problem with the process by which governments screen those from war torn areas who seek refugee status. Top security officials recently confirmed, in testimony before the Senate Homeland Security Committee, that this fear is applicable to the United States' refugee screening process due to "gaps" in available intelligence data. FBI Director James Comey explained the practical effect of the gaps in the screening process when he noted: "we can query our database until the cows come home, but there will be nothing to show up because we have no record of them."

Because of both the heightened security environment after the attacks in Paris and the intelligence gaps that exist with respect to screening of those claiming refugee status, I respectfully request that you place a moratorium on Syrian refugee resettlement in the United States until the screening process can be thoroughly reevaluated, reexamined, and supported by Congress. Moreover, until such a review and ratification by Congress occurs, I am directing all state agencies to suspend participation in the resettlement of Syrian refugees within Georgia. A halt in refugee admissions and critical review of the screening process will help ensure the safety of Georgians and Americans.



I join you in prayer for the people of France, and I thank you for your continued vigilance with respect to this situation.

Respectfully,

Nathan Deal
Governor of Georgia