



September 24, 2020

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo  
The Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. President and Secretary Pompeo:

As bishops and ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), a denomination of 3.5 million people of faith, and as the CEOs of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and Lutheran Services in America, we write to express our support for welcoming refugees and urge you to commit to resettling at least 95,000 refugees in fiscal year 2021.

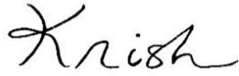
As a testimony to the Lutheran faith values to love our neighbor, accompany the vulnerable, and welcome the stranger, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has exercised an unwavering commitment to assist refugees as they start their new lives in the United States. Our churches began assisting immigrants and people who were uprooted as early as the 1860s. The Lutheran legacy of courageous and compassionate service has made a difference in the lives of half a million people who have sought safety and hope in America's communities and has made LIRS one of the leading resettlement partners of the federal government for the last 40 years.

Today, we are at a critical moment in our nation's history. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we are witnessing the highest level of displacement on record – 79.5 million people have been forcibly displaced from the places they call home. Among them are 26 million refugees, over half of whom are children. Yet, as the global number of refugees needing resettlement grows, U.S. resettlement of refugees has significantly decreased.

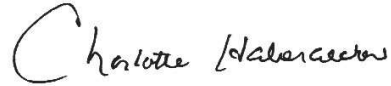
Our congregations have historically played key roles in assisting refugees with housing, language, employment, and social supports necessary for their integration into our communities. Yet, our commitment to offer refuge from violence and persecution requires our government to demonstrate the moral leadership upon which our nation was founded. We must remember that refugee resettlement is the last resort for those who cannot return to their home country due to ongoing violence. Our congregations and communities are eager to welcome refugees, as they have been doing for decades. We have seen refugees work hard, become self-sufficient and become cherished friends, family and neighbors who enrich our lives and strengthen communities and the fabric of our nation.

As people of faith, we believe that we must honor the dignity of every human, regardless of national origin. We have a commitment to follow the teachings of Jesus and to uphold our nation's tradition of protecting the persecuted. We hope you will support refugees now and in the future by resettling at least 95,000 refugees in fiscal year 2021. To restrict thousands of people from seeking safety would be to forsake our nation's values of compassion and welcome.

Sincerely,



**Krish O'Mara Vignarajah**  
President and CEO  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service



**Charlotte Haberaecker**  
President and CEO  
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- 242. Deacon Dr. Janice Zimbelman, Grand Canyon Synod, Prescott, AZ
- 243. Rev. Krista Zimmerman, Mount Pleasant Lutheran Church, Racine, WI