

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROBERT BENTLEY
GOVERNOR



STATE CAPITOL
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STATE OF ALABAMA

November 25, 2015

Denis McDonough, White House Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Simon Henshaw, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your informative calls last week with Governors and their staff on the concerns we collectively have regarding the intake and vetting process of Syrian Refugees into the states. The extensive information you provided was helpful. The information you provided, however, has raised some concerns with me, which I hope may be addressed soon.

In the Governors' call, your Administration advised that volunteer agencies receiving refugees are required to have consultations with states and file quarterly reports. I am writing to advise that the State of Alabama has not received either voluntary consultations or quarterly reports. The refugee program in Alabama is established between the U.S. Department of State and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops pursuant to a cooperative agreement. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has entered a sub-agreement with Catholic Social Services of the Greater Mobile Area. Although it was reported on the call that volunteer agencies are to have consultations with the State four (4) times a year and provide quarterly reports, we are neither receiving these consultations, nor receiving their required reports on refugee reception.

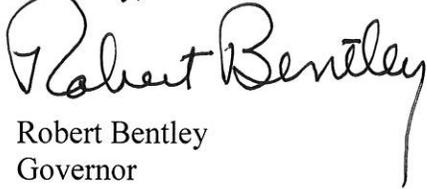
I am respectfully requesting that your Offices direct both the Catholic Social Services of the Greater Mobile Area and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to both provide these reports and conduct the required quarterly consultations with the State beginning immediately.

The lack of reporting by these volunteer organizations stands to further demonstrate my deep concern for the refugee vetting process. As Governor, I take very seriously my responsibility to ensure the safety and security of Alabamians. The refugee vetting process, in my opinion, is

structured in such a way that excludes states from any oversight and severely limits the amount of information the states may have regarding refugees. Given my responsibility as Governor, this raises a deep concern. As the Administration gives strong consideration to the concerns of Governors for the much-needed revision of the vetting process, please keep those concerns I have expressed in mind.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this request and notice of the inadequacy of the reporting of the volunteer organizations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Bentley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" at the beginning and a long, thin vertical stroke extending downwards from the end of the name.

Robert Bentley
Governor

c: Jill Boxler, Director of Federal Relations and Policy Advisor
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Catholic Social Services of the Greater Mobile Area