

August 19, 2019

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Kevin K. McAleenan
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Pompeo, Secretary Azar, and Secretary McAleenan:

Greater Louisville Inc., The Metro Chamber of Commerce (GLI), represents more than 1,800 businesses in Kentucky and Indiana. GLI is committed to economic development, job creation, and growing our regional workforce. Employers in our region are deeply concerned about the Administration's recent proposal to reduce refugee admissions into the United States. Any reduction to the number of refugees allowed to live and work in the United States would negatively affect the ability of organizations like GLI to pursue a competitive labor force and foster a thriving regional economy.

Since 1975, 3.4 million refugees have arrived in the United States. At a time when the U.S. population is growing older, refugees can help lessen the anticipated strain this will place on our workforce. Refugees are far more [likely to be of working-age](#) than the U.S.-born population and typically establish long-term roots in the U.S., with over 84 percent of refugees who have been in the country for 16 to 25 years taking steps to become U.S. citizens. By drastically reducing refugee admissions, local communities like ours will suffer as a result.

Refugees drive economic growth in our communities, earning more than \$86.2 billion in total household income in 2017 and contributing \$23.3 billion of that income to federal, state, and local taxes that keep our metro areas moving. In 2015 alone, refugees in [Kentucky and Indiana](#) held \$234 million and \$277 million in spending power, respectively. This spending power goes directly back into local economies, where refugees are buying homes, consuming local goods, starting businesses, and paying taxes.

Reducing the number of refugee admissions will have long-term, negative impacts on regions like Greater Louisville. Our region is fortunate to have two refugee resettlement agencies, which has made

Greater Louisville a productive environment for refugees to live, work, and start new businesses and has contributed to population growth. A reduction in admissions could lead to the closure of one of these agencies, which would put Greater Louisville at a strategic disadvantage in the future.

Refugees have long played a key role in Greater Louisville's economy by starting new businesses, actively participating in our regional workforce, and making valuable contributions and improvements to our quality of life. We urge you to oppose any reductions to the number of refugees admitted into the United States and to maintain or increase current caps.

Sincerely,

Kent Oylar
GLI CEO and President