



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MICHIGAN

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

December 3, 2015

Governor Rick Snyder  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Snyder,

The League of Women Voters of Michigan implores you to reconsider your "pause" on accepting Syrian refugees in Michigan. The LWV position on immigration encourages us to, "be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises" and to "ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons."

We appreciate your concern for safety of Michigan citizens but most of us were, at some point in our lineage, an immigrant to the United States. Each of us came from a different place and for a multitude of reasons, but various forms of 'freedom' were certainly driving factors.

It is our understanding that the Federal government has a very stringent process in place for the acceptance of refugees.<sup>1</sup> There is certainly a greater physical and emotional risk to the refugees by leaving them in refugee camps.

- **Purpose:** *The Atlantic* reports that, "About 1.2 million people have sought asylum in the EU since the start of 2014. Many of them are people fleeing the Syrian civil war, and unrest in Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, and elsewhere."<sup>2</sup>
- **Perspective:** *Brookings*, discusses the minimal disruption that actually occurs when people need to flee their homeland for security reasons. For instance, "the 1.9 million people who have sought asylum since January 2012 amount to only 0.37 percent of the EU population."<sup>3</sup>
- **Scope:** International Rescue Committee president, David Miliband, said "With 4 million living in limbo and tens of thousands making desperate choices to reach safety, the US has a moral responsibility to lead and is fully equipped to respond in a far more robust way."<sup>4</sup>
- **Human Decency:** In 1945, in response to the immigration crisis following WWII, President Truman said, "Common decency and the fundamental comradeship of all human beings" requires that we open our borders."<sup>5</sup>

Michigan should be addressing the pressing humanitarian concerns of people who just want to survive a civil war which has put their families at dire risk and the terrible circumstances these families face as they flee that conflict. We have witnessed many times in human history opportunities for helping refugees that went unmet and resulted in horrific crimes against humanity. Fear of terrorism should never be cause for Michigan citizens to turn innocent people away from dire circumstances.

We urge you to reconsider your position to "pause" and set a positive example for other states to follow.

Sincerely,

Judy Karandjeff  
President

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/11/20/infographic-screening-process-refugee-entry-united-states>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/11/economic-impact-european-refugee-crisis/414364/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/future-development/posts/2015/09/16-economic-impact-refugees-cali>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/09/syria-refugees-europe-vietnam>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/perspectives/refugee-experience-united-states>