



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

File #: R2015-915, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago is proud to be one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world, where one-out-of-five of the city's residents was born outside of the United States; and

WHEREAS, With residents from more than 140 countries and more than 100 languages spoken in our city, Chicago is truly a city of immigrants; and

WHEREAS, The people of Chicago have a long history of opening their arms and homes to the vulnerable and disadvantaged; and

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago has been built on the strength of its immigrant communities; and

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago reaffirmed its commitment to serve as a sanctuary city for immigrants when it adopted the "Welcoming City Ordinance" in 2012; and

WHEREAS, The conflict in Syria has caused a refugee crisis, which the City of Chicago will not ignore; and

WHEREAS, More than seven million Syrians have been displaced by war, and many referred to the United States for resettlement are the most vulnerable from Syria's collapse: torture survivors, people with special medical needs, women who head households, and children; and

WHEREAS, The number of refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria to neighboring countries has now eclipsed four million, thus confirming the Syrian refugee crisis as the world's single largest refugee crisis in almost a quarter of a century; and

WHEREAS, President Obama has committed to accepting 10,000 Syrian refugees within the next year; and

WHEREAS, Those wishing to come to the United States must apply through the United Nations and are subject to the highest level of security checks of any category of traveler to our country; and

WHEREAS, Refugees are vetted by the National Counterterrorism Center, the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center, and the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security; and

WHEREAS, Refugees from Syria are subject to additional screening that verifies what caused them to flee their home; and

WHEREAS, The intense background and medical checks required of refugees can take as much as two years to complete; and

1

WHEREAS, Half of the Syrian refugees brought to the United States have been children, a quarter are adults, and approximately 2 percent are single males of combat age; and

WHEREAS, Governor Bruce Rauner recently announced that Illinois would temporarily stop accepting Syrian refugees and will consider all legal options related to his intention to ban Syrian refugees from Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Illinois has no legal options if it intends to dictate immigration policy to the federal government; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court of the United States explained in *Hines v. Davidowitz*, "the supremacy of the national power in the general field of foreign affairs, including power over immigration, naturalization and deportation, is made clear by the Constitution"; and

WHEREAS, The Refugee Act of 1980 declared it "the historic policy of the United States to respond to the urgent needs of persons subject to persecution in their homelands" and gave the President the power to handle an "unforeseen emergency refugee situation" such as one involving "grave humanitarian concerns"; and

WHEREAS, Syrian refugees should to be treated with the dignity, care, and compassion that every person deserves; and

WHEREAS, Refugees legally admitted to the United States require housing and support services such as counseling, education, health care, food, security, case management and legal assistance; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is the largest refugee resettlement organization in the nation and has overseen placement of deserving families in Chicago; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we the Mayor and the members of the City Council of the City of Chicago hereby reaffirm the City of Chicago's status as a sanctuary city and its commitment to remain a place of sanctuary and refuge for refugees from around the world; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Chicago hereby urges city departments, local businesses, and charitable organizations to work with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to provide shelter and sustenance for refugee families relocating to Chicago and integrating into our communities.