



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 26, 2016

House Leaders Inform DHS Secretary That Obama Refugee Program Threatens National Security

House Oversight Committee Chairman Jason  Chaffetz (R-Utah) and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) sent a letter to Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson on September 22, in which they cited an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) document that validated their concerns that the Obama administration's refugee resettlement program is "creating national security risks."

The ICE document, noted the congressmen, "confirms a key finding from the Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, that 'terrorists will utilize benefit fraud (to include asylum and refugee fraud) to legitimize their stay in the United States.' "

Chaffetz and Goodlatte included a copy of the ICE document with their letter to Johnson and quoted portions of its in their letter, including:

The Immigration System is a constant target for exploitation by individuals who seek to enter the United States and who are otherwise ineligible for entry based on security grounds. The Refugee Program is one such avenue in which ineligible aliens seek to enter by fraud.

[The] Refugee Program is particularly vulnerable to fraud due to loose evidentiary requirements where at times the testimony of an applicant alone is sufficient for approval. As a result, a range of bad actors, who use manufactured histories, biographies and other false statements, as well as produce and submit fictitious supporting documentation, have exploited this program.

Refugee fraud is easy to commit, yet not easy to investigate [because] [r]efugee laws purposefully contain relaxed evidentiary requirements.... Refugees applications do not require sponsorship of a third party, such as a relative or employer, [and] Refugee claims are typically made in areas of the world where it is difficult to investigate the veracity of the claim.

In addition to the strong possibility of fraud enabling potential terrorists to enter the United States illegally under the refugee program, Chaffetz and Goodlatte also criticized President Obama's failure to consult with Congress before establishing limits on the number of refugees to be admitted during each fiscal year, as is required under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Instead of complying with the act, noted the congressmen, Obama "has informed Congress of a decision that has already been made."

Getting down to specifics, the pair of committee chairmen noted:

On September 13, 2016, Secretary of State John Kerry informed Congress that the Administration



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will set the refugee ceiling for FY 2017 at 110,000.... He also noted that the number of refugees admitted during FY 2017 will increase to a number greater than the 13,000 that were admitted during FY 2016....

In setting the number, the Administration does not appear to consider how refugee resettlement will affect local communities. The decision to resettle refugees in a community is ultimately left to the State Department. That sensitive decision should occur in true consultation with local community leaders, but it often does not. In fact, the Administration and resettlement agency communications with state and local officials is sometimes so perfunctory that residents are taken by surprise when refugees start arriving.

Perhaps the most important point that the congressmen made was:

The President's decision to increase overall refugee resettlement — and specifically that of Syrian refugees — ignores warnings from his own national security officials that Syrians cannot be adequately vetted to ensure terrorists are not admitted.... *Revelations about fraud, security gaps, and lack of oversight have demonstrated that the program is creating national security risks.* [Emphasis added.]

The *Washington Times* reported that when ICE Director Sarah Saldaña was shown the ICE document included with the letter from the congressmen at a hearing on September 22, she said: "I have never seen this document before."

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