

Welcome City Council Resolution Draft Bellingham, WA

WHEREAS refugees are often forced to flee their country because they have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group;

WHEREAS there are 25.9 million refugees in the world today, and half of the world's refugees are children;

WHEREAS refugees are fleeing armed conflict and persecution in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Central America, and other regions;

WHEREAS there is a continued lack of funding for humanitarian aid for host countries, and food rations and medical aid have been repeatedly cut for refugees;

WHEREAS refugees who need to be resettled include torture survivors, people with severe medical conditions, LGBTI individuals, and children alone – all of whom who cannot return home and cannot stay in their host country due to their extreme vulnerability;

WHEREAS a refugee has no choice about where they are resettled;

WHEREAS, even if a refugee is conditionally offered resettlement in the United States, they must still be found admissible under U.S. immigration law;

WHEREAS few refugees from Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, North Korea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen are now permitted to resettle in the United States (or none from some of these countries);

WHEREAS, refugees are the most vetted individuals to enter the United States, undergoing security checks by multiple law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and are not permitted to travel to the U.S. until all security screenings have been successfully completed;

WHEREAS we applaud the historic, bi-partisan tradition of the United States in welcoming refugees, in keeping with our country's values and commitments to human rights;

WHEREAS organizations such as Catholic Community Services, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and the International Rescue Committee, among others, have resettled more than 24,000 refugees in the state of Washington in the last 10 years from more than 50 countries including Ukraine, Iraq, Somalia and Burma;

RESOLVED, Bellingham City Council declares its support and welcomes the resettlement of refugees no matter their religion, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, or country of origin, in Bellingham and calls upon other Washington communities to join them in supporting a stronger national effort to resettle the most vulnerable refugees.