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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

December 13, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

I am writing concerning reports that the Department of State seeks to reduce the number of refugee resettlement sites in Buffalo. Refugee resettlement has been an important part of Buffalo's prosperity and a critical catalyst for revitalization. Therefore, I urge you to reject any reduction or closure of resettlement agencies in New York State.

I have long advocated against reducing the number of refugees because of their economic and cultural contribution to our great state of New York. Over the last decade, New York has resettled 40,000 refugees<sup>1</sup> with almost all of them in cities like Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, and Utica. In fact, according to an analysis by the New American Economy<sup>2</sup>, foreign-born residents contributed greatly to federal, state, and local taxes, including property, income, sales, and excise taxes levied by either the State of New York or by municipal governments. According to the same analysis, foreign-born residents contributed \$3.1B to the GDP of the Buffalo metro area. This could not have been done without the expertise of the resettlement agencies to help them find jobs and training, even helping them establish new businesses and create jobs after getting settled.

The city of Buffalo, New York is a welcoming, preferred resettlement site with growing economic opportunities. Buffalo is a city of opportunity for all, and refugee resettlement has been an important part of its revitalization. Over the past five years, from 2013 to 2018, more than 6,298 refugees have arrived in Buffalo<sup>3</sup>. They have also helped newly arrived children enroll in our schools, adding to the diversity and richness of our educational system. The refugee community has been a focus of the city's rising prosperity. Refugees and resettlement

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<sup>1</sup> Leary, Alex. "In struggling upstate New York cities, refugees vital to rebirth" published by Tampa Bay Times on December 13, 2018. [https://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/national/In-struggling-upstate-New-York-cities-refugees-vital-to-rebirth\\_162688301](https://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/national/In-struggling-upstate-New-York-cities-refugees-vital-to-rebirth_162688301)

<sup>2</sup> New American Economy. "New Americans in Buffalo and Syracuse" published by New American Economy on February 21, 2017. [https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/BuffaloSyracuse\\_brief\\_Final.pdf](https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/BuffaloSyracuse_brief_Final.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Cuomo, Andrew M. "Letter on Buffalo Refugee Resettlement Site" published by the Office of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo on December 11, 2018. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-calls-us-state-department-maintain-buffalo-refugee-resettlement-sites>

programming is so important to our economy and community that New York State has even added funding for post-resettlement programming through the NYS Enhanced Services to Refugees Program for two years. I am pleased to support that program and others that have clearly demonstrated their value – but without resettlement they cannot help.

Refugee resettlement sites in Buffalo are critical. All four of the existing resettlement agencies serve different needs and should be kept open to continue the essential work of welcoming refugees to our community. It would be detrimental to Buffalo if any one of these agencies, Journey's End Refugee Services, the Jewish Family Service of Buffalo and Erie County, the International Institute of Buffalo, or Catholic Charities of Buffalo, was forced to close its doors.

Thank you for continuing to resettle refugees in Western New York. I urge you to keep all of the resettlement agencies in Buffalo, NY open.

Sincerely,



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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator