



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

November 19, 2016

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to vote against H.R. 4038, the “American SAFE Act of 2015.” At a time when the world is suffering from the largest refugee crisis since World War II, this bill puts in place an overly bureaucratic review process that would effectively stop Syrian and Iraqi refugee resettlement. We must not let the tragedy of recent terrorist attacks lead us to shut the door on families fleeing the very violence and persecution that the world stands united in opposing.

H.R. 4038 creates a process that could add years to an already robust security screening procedure by requiring the concurrence of three heads of federal agencies and thirteen Congressional committees on every individual refugee application. The security process already takes more than two years for most Syrian refugees.

The U.S. already has one of the most rigorous refugee security screening processes in the world. In addition to U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees screenings, the U.S. government implements a multi-layered security process that involves the Departments of Homeland Security, Defense, State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Counterterrorism Center. Syrian refugees undergo multiple biographic and biometric checks and must pass multiple face-to-face interviews before they set foot in the country.

The AFL-CIO represents tens of thousands of refugee union members, as well as front-line service providers who ensure proper screening of refugees and address their humanitarian needs. We have consistently called upon Congress to live up to its obligation to meet the needs of refugee populations, whether they are from Syria or right here in our own hemisphere.

We urge Congress to live up to our nation’s longstanding commitment to provide safe haven to those fleeing oppression and violence, and we urge you to reject this bill.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs