



Congressman Alan Lowenthal

Member, House Committee on Natural Resources | Foreign Affairs

Representing California's 47th District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Congressman Lowenthal Statement on Syrian Refugee Crisis

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As Americans, I strongly believe we must do everything we can to protect human rights for all – the right to live freely with dignity and respect and without the threat of violence or repression. The ongoing conflict in Iraq and Syria and the violence and brutality of ISIS and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has forced more than four million refugees to flee their homes. Of these refugees, more than three million are women and children. These displaced persons, faced with unimaginable conditions, have left their homes and livelihoods to escape the violence and terrorism ravaging their countries.

The United States has historically played a major role in global refugee resettlement—in fact, we typically welcome more refugees than any other country in the world, offering freedom and protection to those escaping the most dangerous and desperate situations. I continue to support the Administration's commitment to resettle 10,000 refugees, but this is, unfortunately, far from enough. That is why I joined 70 of my colleagues in the House and sent a letter to President Obama to advocate for increasing the resettlement quota.

I do, however, recognize and understand the security concerns associated with resettlement. The terrible and tragic terror attacks in both Paris and San Bernardino have shaken our nation. While national security must be our highest priority, we can accomplish this goal and at the same time maintain our proud historical tradition of providing safe harbor for those trying to escape religious and political oppression.

I voted against H.R.4038, the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act, because it adds little, if anything, to the screening process. Moreover, it would hinder our ability to assist the most vulnerable individuals fleeing from terror and destruction. This bill would require the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secretary of the Department Homeland Security, and the Director of National Intelligence to each individually certify and sign-off before admitting any single refugee.

This would be in addition to the already robust vetting and screening process of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. At this moment, refugees wait up to 18-24 months as they are reviewed by the

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the U.S. Department of State, with each individual's information reviewed and several in-person interviews conducted by a U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services field team.

Make no mistake: we must maintain and protect the safety and security of the United States. I am, of course, unwavering in my commitment to protecting our country from terrorism. I believe our already incredibly thorough vetting process will allow us to join with many other countries around the world in taking in some of those fleeing conflict and that are desperate for safety and stability.

I will continue to support strong security checks and any additional resources needed by U.S. resettlement agencies to meet the increased demand.

The United States has a long and proud tradition of helping the world's most vulnerable people. I believe it is our moral duty to do what we can to assist those fleeing the violence and turmoil in the Middle East. As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I will continue to make international humanitarian aid a top priority, while ensuring the national security of the United States.

Congressman Alan Lowenthal represents the cities of Long Beach, Lakewood, Signal Hill, Avalon, Los Alamitos, Rossmore, Cypress, Westminster, Garden Grove, Buena Park, Anaheim, Midway City and Stanton in California's 47th Congressional District. He can be followed on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or his [website](#).

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CONTACT:

Keith Higginbotham
Communications Director | Congressman Alan Lowenthal
108 Cannon Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 740-2517 cell
(202) 225-7924 office

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