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December 10, 2018

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

Dear Secretary of State Pompeo:

I am writing to you to express my grave concern about the Administration's directive to reduce the number of refugee settlement sites nationwide. In my district, there are four resettlement agencies that are critical to continuing essential work of welcoming refugees to our community and should not be closed.

The United States has a long history of resettling refugees and has done so effectively with the aid of the nine national resettlement agencies and their local affiliates. Since 1980, with the exception of Fiscal Year 2018, the U.S. resettled on average 80,000 refugees per year. It is abhorrent to me that in this time of the largest global refugee crisis, the United States has taken the position of severely limiting our ability to resettle those who are escaping the horrors in their own countries and also removing the capacity of the U.S. to do so efficiently in the future.

Our local resettlement sites - Jewish Family Service of Buffalo and Erie County, Journey's End, Catholic Charities of Buffalo, and International Institute of Buffalo - have a long track record of helping to successfully integrate refugees. Over the past 5 years, more than 6,298 refugees have arrived in Buffalo. Resettlement is often the "last resort" for refugees who cannot return to their home country. These sites have the institutional knowledge and capabilities to help refugees successfully assimilate into the U.S. by providing an array of services such as language and job skill development programs.

Each of these sites has its own area of expertise that benefit the entire community. For example, Jewish Family Service of Buffalo and Erie County is well known for its work with deaf refugees and survivors of torture and trauma, and Journey's End is a recognized expert in providing legal immigration services and specialized education services to clients. Similarly, the International Institute of Buffalo provides critical services to trafficking and domestic violence victims, and Catholic Charities of Buffalo has spearheaded multiple training programs with local employers. Refugees and the broader community will be at a distinct disadvantage if these services are no longer available.

Refugee resettlement agencies are critical to supporting the United States' highest ideals of freedom and independence. They uphold our values of compassion, leadership, and self-sufficiency. I strongly urge you to keep all of the resettlement agencies in my district open because closing them would be

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detrimental to the broader Western New York community and those seeking stability and safety here in the United States.

Sincerely,



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

CC: Carol O'Connell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration

CC: Director of Admissions Larry Bartlett, Director of Refugee Admissions

CC: Barbara Day, Domestic Section Chief, Refugee Admissions, Domestic Resettlement