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January 20, 2015

## **Oppose H.R. 4038's Refugee Policy "Reforms"**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, we write to express our strong opposition to H.R. 4038, the "American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act of 2015." This bill would effectively end the admission of refugees from Syria and Iraq, while doing virtually nothing to improve "American security against foreign enemies," as the name suggests. It is an illogical, poorly considered proposal that is simultaneously far too broad and far too narrow.

Under our current system, refugees resettled in the United States undergo more security vetting than immigrants or visitors who come here through any other channel, and more than refugees who are resettled in any other country in the world. Yet under H.R. 4038, and after we have already resettled 3 million refugees from around the world since 1975 (including 100,000 from Iraq), Congress would just now conclude that our security screening procedures are insufficient. In their place, H.R. 4038 would institute new screening procedures for Syrian and Iraqi refugees – procedures which are poorly defined, but which would take years to fully implement.

The practical impact of H.R. 4038's onerous new requirements would be to prevent any refugees from either of these two countries from being admitted for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, only five days after last November's terrorist attacks in Paris, French President Francois Hollande reaffirmed that France would honor its commitment to admit 30,000 refugees from war-torn Syria – three times more than President Obama had proposed to admit.

At the same time that H.R. 4038 would cause us to cede our decades-long moral high ground in protecting refugees, we struggle to comprehend precisely how it would make America safer. If the assumption behind H.R. 4038 is that Iraqi and Syrian citizens somehow pose a greater threat than citizens of other countries, this bill does not affect the admissions of immigrants or nonimmigrant visitors via other legal channels. If the assumption behind the bill is that refugees somehow pose a greater threat than other types of immigrants, this bill only affects refugee admissions from two countries.

We are certainly not suggesting that H.R. 4038 be expanded in any way. But the narrow scope of the bill does make us wonder exactly what the sponsors are hoping to accomplish through its enactment. We should note that few if any of the terrorists who attacked Paris last November, and none of the hijackers who attacked our country on September 11, 2001, would have been prevented from entering the United States under the provisions of this bill.



Again, we urge you to oppose this bill, and to vote against cloture on the motion to proceed today. If you have any questions, please contact either of us, or Senior Counsel Rob Randhava, at (202) 466-331.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wade Henderson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Wade Henderson  
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Zirkin'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Nancy Zirkin  
Executive Vice President