

## Conservative Action Project

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The Conservative Action Project, founded by former **Attorney General Edwin Meese** and chaired by **The Honorable Becky Norton Dunlop**, is designed to facilitate conservative leaders working together on behalf of common goals. Participants include the CEO's of over 100 organizations representing all major elements of the conservative movement-economic, social and national security.

### Memo for the Movement

## *Syrian Immigration: A Grave National Security Threat*

November 30, 2015  
Washington, DC

### **The burden to keep our immigration system both safe and generous falls on Congress.**

America's immigration system is the most generous in the world. Accordingly, the law allows for those who have a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" to enter the U.S. as a refugee. This definition is importantly limited in scope and applies to individuals on a case-by-case basis. It may not apply to everyone fleeing one country equally.

The State Department, according to its legal authority granted by Congress, announced that 10,000 of the 85,000 refugee slots for 2016 will be reserved for Syrians. Given the current climate around the globe, a refugee population so large, fleeing a war torn region, with ample evidence that a group of Syrian refugees is much more likely to contain Islamic Extremists bent on violence in America creating a completely unsecure, dangerous, and untenable situation for the American people.

During his testimony before the House Committee on Homeland Security last week, FBI Director James Comey clearly indicated that the FBI does not have the ability to conduct thorough background checks on 10,000 Syrian refugees. At the moment, we are convinced there is no possible way to verify the identity and credibility of Syrian refugees, and recognize that to be a grave national security threat. Of the challenge in verifying the identity of a Syrian refugee, he said, "And so if someone has never made a ripple in the pond in Syria in a way that would get their identity or their interest reflected in our database, we can query our database until the cows come home, but there will be nothing show up because we have no record of them."

Until there is assurance that all potential terrorists are screened out, Syrian refugees cannot be allowed to immigrate to the United States. If the administration is determined to grant refugee status to 10,000 (or more) Syrian refugees, it is incumbent upon Congress to intervene. According to Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, the Congress has sole discretion over immigration law and federal spending. On December 11th, funding for all government programs will expire. In the interest of national security, Congress must prohibit funding for the State Department to allow any Syrian immigrant to gain refugee status.

There are compassionate approaches that do not entail the security risks associated with allowing vast numbers of un-vetted, displaced people into the United States. For example, humanitarian support could be provided directly to displaced people currently in refugee camps in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and elsewhere. We could also assist the government of Kurdistan in its

efforts to care for those displaced by shifting already allotted financial and/or other resources for the current camps, and also ensure more are built if needed.

Congress should then work with the intelligence agencies to develop a vetting process that assures the nation our refugee laws do not make us less safe. We must be able to verify that any individual seeking any immigration status does not pose a threat to this nation. Congress should pause any new Syrian refugees, and allow a deliberative process for lawmakers to ensure any proposed vetting process is secure, transparent, and respects the role of state governments.

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