



LSC responds to Syrian refugee crisis

Lutheran Services Carolinas president, Ted Goins, writes:

As the United States joins the world in mourning the victims of the horrific ISIL terrorist attacks in Paris, decisions are being made about how to keep the United States safe. There is worry, and justifiably so, about similar attacks in this country from terrorist infiltrators or from homegrown terrorists.

One response to these fears has been a push to prevent Syrian refugees from coming to the U.S. The reality is that Syrian refugees are also victims of ISIL. They have fled the kind of terror that played out in Paris, and many escaped Syria with little more than their lives and their hope for a future free from violence and persecution.

As president of Lutheran Services Carolinas, I am proud of our organization's work to welcome refugees from around the world. LSC always tries to avoid political issues and just serve people. That is becoming increasingly difficult in these turbulent and divisive times.

While as a state and a country we determine how to respond both rationally and compassionately in the wake of the ISIL attacks in Europe, there are some things that are important to remember. Refugees are not immigrants who choose to resettle in another country; they are victims of violence and persecution who are forced to flee. All refugees who enter this country are handpicked and go through multiple layers of security checks involving the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security. They are among the most thoroughly vetted individuals to set foot on American soil. The process is lengthy and grueling, and it protects U.S. citizens.

We are indeed fortunate in this country. We are largely insulated from the tidal wave of human suffering that threatens to drown other parts of the world. But it's lapping at our shores now, and we must decide: "How will we respond?"

Quoting Matthew, "...I was a stranger and you welcomed me." LSC will continue to resettle refugees assigned to the Carolinas in accordance with all laws and regulations. LSC encourages all U.S. citizens to actively participate in the political process. Should the law change to eliminate refugee resettlement, LSC will comply.

Thank you for your prayers for LSC as we stand for welcome for people who have walked through the valley of the shadow of death, and as we continue to navigate these difficult societal issues. Please go to www.lscarolinas.net for more information about refugee resettlement.

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President of Lutheran Services Carolinas