[Date]

The Honorable Thad Cochran

Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations

S-128 Capitol, Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers

Chair, House Committee on Appropriations

H-305 Capitol, Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski

Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations

S-146A Capitol, Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey

Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations

1016 Longworth Office Building, Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Mikulski and Ranking Member Lowey:

We, the undersigned Governors and Mayors, write to urge you to secure additional resources for the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) for the fast approaching federal fiscal year 2017. Current Congressional proposals for ORR’s funding would flat line funding at fiscal year 2016 levels, which will be insufficient. Therefore, we urge you to do everything in your power to ensure that ORR can provide our states and communities the support needed to serve refugees, unaccompanied children, torture and trafficking survivors, Special Immigrant Visa recipients who served alongside U.S. troops, and all populations under its mandate.

During this time of historical displacement of people around the world, it is our understanding that the Administration plans to increase the number of refugees admitted to the United States through the U.S. refugee resettlement program. The FY 2016 budget was calculated to serve 75,000 refugees, compared with the 110,000 refugees planned to arrive in FY 2017.

While we understand that many refugees are able to access employment and provide for their families in a rapid manner, these new residents do require some initial federal support. ORR provides grants to state governments, public schools, and local resettlement agencies to provide job training, English instruction, and cash and medical assistance to help refugees integrate into their new communities.

We have heard from many of our constituents about their support for the refugee resettlement program, and we recognize the significant contributions of business, faith, and non-profit communities to the success of these refugee families. However, we are concerned about the potential deficit in federal funds that could negatively impact this public/private partnership. Without a commensurate increase in federal funds for support services, refugees and local communities in our states will undoubtedly face negative impacts.

Many of us have refugee ancestors and we remain ready to partner with the federal government on this longstanding program, but require additional support as we prepare for increased refugee arrivals. We thank you for your attention to this request, and remain available for additional conversations about the upcoming fiscal year and our anticipated needs.

Regards,