

**Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on Immigration and the national Interest
Hearing on Oversight of the Administration's FY 2017 Refugee Resettlement Program
September 28, 2016**

The Immigration and Nationality Act requires that a representative of the President consult with members of the Committee on the Judiciary “to review the refugee situation or emergency refugee situation, to project the extent of possible participation of the United States therein, to discuss the reasons for believing that the proposed admission of refugees is justified by humanitarian concerns or grave humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest.”

This so-called consultation took place on September 13 of this year. At that meeting, members of the House and Senate heard from the Departments of State and Homeland Security, raised concerns and asked questions. We discussed the goal of the Obama administration to admit 110,000 total refugees this coming year. This goal represents a 57% increase over a two-year period from the 70,000 refugees admitted in fiscal year 2015.

The United States provides safe haven to nearly 70 percent of the world's refugees, so there's no questioning the generosity and welcoming spirit of the American people. But we have to balance the number of refugees we admit with the impacts on our country generally, and on our local communities in particular. President Obama's plan to ramp up the number of refugees to 110,000 in 2017 fails to consider the taxpayer burden as well as the budgetary constraints of communities that must absorb the refugees. And it fails to address the national security risks of admitting people without a robust background check system to truly vet them.

The consultation with the Secretary of State provided a dialogue on the President's plan to admit a “significantly higher number” of refugees from Syria. This past fiscal year, the Obama administration admitted 13,000 Syrian refugees, which is 30% more than the target reported to Congress. Yet, the administration has not been forthcoming about how many Syrians will be admitted in the year ahead. They simply say it will be “significantly” more than 13,000. Congress and the American people are left in the dark about their true plans for refugees from this war-torn area.

There's no doubt that we are a welcoming nation, but we also need the Obama Administration to act in good faith by providing Congress with accurate figures rather than vague ‘targets’ for admission. The Administration must also work better with the communities that absorb the influx and commit to a background check system that ensures America remains a safe place for citizens and refugees alike.

We cannot allow America's welcome mat to be turned into a door mat for radicalized Islamic extremists who are hard-wired to kill innocent people and destroy our way of life. So, we must continually review our processes and recurrently vet those who seek to enter or those who may have already been admitted. I look forward to hearing from the Executive Branch today about their plans for the coming year, what they are doing to continually improve the vetting

process, and how they are working with state and locals to integrate refugees who live in our communities.