

Statement by Chuck Grassley
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest
“Oversight of the Administration’s FY 2016 Refugee Resettlement Program:
Fiscal and Security Implications”
October 1, 2015

I appreciate the Chairman of this subcommittee for holding a hearing on this very important topic. The Immigration and Nationality Act requires that the President report to Congress regarding the “foreseeable number of refugees who will be in need of resettlement during the fiscal year.” Secretary Kerry consulted with members of this committee and provided some background on the President’s request. This hearing helps fulfill our statutory responsibility to review the President’s proposal.

The United States welcomes more refugees than the rest of the world’s countries combined. There’s no question that we will continue to play a critical role in helping those around the world who are suffering or are persecuted.

Nevertheless, the American people are very concerned about the role this country will play in solving the problems in the Middle East. The President's refugee proposal includes a plan to accept more than 10,000 refugees who are fleeing from Syria.

ISIS and other terrorist groups have made it abundantly clear that they will use the refugee crisis to try to enter the United States. And, it's becoming apparent that people in other countries are attempting to hide in the masses in order to enter Europe. Reports suggest that a vast number of those fleeing Syria are neither Syrian nor refugees. The International Organization for Migration reports that only 40% of those showing up at Europe's borders are Syrians. Some suggest that people from Iraq, Afghanistan, and sub-Saharan Africa are fleeing their homelands and taking advantage of the crisis.

If the Obama administration wants to bring in an additional ten thousand Syrians, it must present a concrete and foolproof plan to ensure that terrorists won't be able to enter the country. And, the administration needs to show that it has enlisted the help of other capable, affluent nations in the Middle East to deal with the crisis in Syria.

I have several questions for our witnesses, including how the administration will screen individuals for terrorist ties, and just as importantly, what it will do if it finds out an individual is a terrorist after that person has been granted refugee status.

Before agreeing to accept tens of thousands of Syrian refugees, the Obama administration must prove to the American people that it will take the necessary precautions to ensure that national security is a top priority, especially at a time when ruthless terrorist groups like ISIS are committed to finding ways to enter the United States and harm Americans.