



Working to Reduce Poverty in America

September 5, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

As you decide the Presidential Determination for Fiscal Year 2019 refugee admissions, I ask that you take into consideration the plight of the more than 65 million refugees seeking humanitarian assistance, and urge you to increase the number of refugees above the current level for FY 2019.

Throughout our long history, the Catholic Charities ministry across the United States has worked to protect and uphold the dignity of all people. In 2017, Catholic Charities agencies provided services to more than 8 million people, including 16,000 refugees. Our agencies help refugees adjust to life in the United States by offering a wide range of social and legal services including housing and financial assistance, employment and training, language classes, and other support to help build their new lives. Catholic Charities agencies witness the challenges faced by newcomers to our country, but also see the incredible contributions refugees make to our country.

As you make the determination on refugees for this fiscal year, I urge you to remember that these individuals are often fleeing for their lives after years of living in make-shift camps and persecution. I have prayed with my fellow Dominican Sisters and members of their communities living as refugees in Kurdistan after fleeing ISIS. I have seen their communities' fortitude of spirit and their simple desire to have a safe home. Closing the door to them and other refugees living with the same reality betrays our nation's history as a beacon of hope for those in need.

The number of refugee admissions is at a historic low. The American people are some of the most generous people in the world whose spirit of generosity has welcomed refugees from WWII to today. Throughout this time, Catholic Charities has stood together with these communities to welcome and integrate refugees. It is my prayer that this spirit of generosity guides your thoughts as you consider this year's Presidential Determination so that our nation can continue to welcome the stranger as our faith has challenged us to do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna J. Markham OP, PhD".

Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD  
President and CEO  
Catholic Charities USA

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Charles Cornelio

**President & CEO**  
Sr. Donna Markham OP, PhD

**Vice Chair**  
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