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Dear Colleague:

I am writing to you because you showed a commitment to common sense reforms and the safety of our fellow Americans when you voted for the American SAFE Act this past November. Since the bill passed the House with a bipartisan, veto-proof majority, many have tried to politicize this issue. I'm thankful for leaders like you who have avoided this temptation, and I appreciate your careful discernment and commitment to the security of the American people.

With the recent terror-related arrests of two Iraqi refugees in California and Texas, we see the difficulty our law enforcement officials have with properly vetting refugees from Iraq and Syria. Top security officials in President Barack Obama's administration have admitted the gaping holes in available intelligence that terrorists have vowed to exploit. The Director of National Intelligence confirmed in a letter to Homeland Security Chairman Michael McCaul that individuals with ties to terrorists groups in Syria have attempted to gain entry to the United States through the refugee program.

As FBI Director James Comey testified to Congress in October 2015:

"If someone has never made a ripple in the pond in Syria in a way that would get their identity or their interest reflected in our database, we can query our database until the cows come home, but there will be nothing [that] show[s] up because we have no record of them."

Despite these obvious reasons for caution, President Obama is not listening to his top law enforcement officials or bipartisan concerns here in Congress over this program. The president has continued to stick to his plan to admit at least 10,000 refugees from Syria and Iraq— nearly six times the number of refugees admitted in the previous year.

A six-fold increase would stress even a perfectly functioning system, but this is a system our top law enforcement officials have stated multiple times is not able to properly vet and verify the refugees coming into our country. The consequences of admitting even one individual with ties to a terrorist organization could be catastrophic. The letter from the DNI and the recent arrests in California and Texas are evidence that the risks are too great and demonstrate that immediate action is needed.

I am encouraging you, as my colleague, to:

1. Schedule a time with the Committee on Homeland Security to read the Director of National Intelligence's classified response letter to Chairman McCaul's inquiry into the refugee program; and
2. Encourage your Senate counterparts to ask Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to bring up the American SAFE Act in the Senate so we can get this legislation on the president's desk.

We are a compassionate nation, and the American SAFE Act honors our commitment to this ideal. However, it is simply common sense that we first verify we have the systems in place to properly identify each individual admitted and to adequately assess their risk to our safety. Thank you for your careful consideration and commitment to the security of the American people.

Sincerely,



Richard Hudson
Member of Congress