



SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER

Rise Up AND Act for Justice

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June 20 – World Refugee Day We Should Be Celebrating

Statement by Lawrence E. Couch

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June 20 is World Refugee Day. It is a day when we should be celebrating those iconic American dream stories of refugees who survived terrible troubles and landed on our shores to rebuild their lives and improve the wealth and health of our country. It is a day when we should be welcoming new refugees, easing their heartaches and helping them add to the American story.

Instead, we make note of something that is hard to miss. We make note of the absence of the refugee. Not because there are no more refugees. Indeed, there are twenty two million refugees worldwide – more than half of whom are children. But because the United States of America, that beacon of hope and welcome has essentially shut its door in the faces of these innocent people. The United States drastically slashed the number of refugees it would accept this year to an embarrassing 30,000 – the lowest level in the history of the United States of America. And it's a target that we may not reach.

The National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the sisters and their lay partners call on Congress to ensure that the United States resettles at least 30,000 refugees this fiscal year and cosponsors two bills – the Grace Act and the No Ban Act.

[The Grace Act (S.1088 / H.R.2146) would set a minimum refugee admissions goal of 95,000 each year, which is the average goal set between 1980 and 2017. It also mandates quarterly reports on refugee admissions. The No Ban Act (S.1123 / H.R.2214) would repeal the Muslim bans, refugee bans and asylum ban, and it would prevent administrations from setting such bans in the future.]

The drastically low number of refugees that the United States is welcoming leaves tens of thousands of vulnerable refugees whom we could have been helping just a couple years ago without a chance at safety and without peace.

Refugees are more than just a global figure; they are families torn apart, children who have witnessed profound violence, and people seeking a chance to rebuild their lives and raise a family in safety. Protecting vulnerable populations is not a zero-sum game; we can and should protect refugees and others fleeing violence or persecution.

[The National Advocacy Center](http://www.gsadvocacy.org) educates and advocates on social justice issues for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people reflecting the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. NAC advocates at the Federal level for people

living in poverty, immigrants, survivors of human trafficking, survivors of domestic abuse, and other vulnerable populations.

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd was founded in France in 1835 and are in over 70 countries on 5 continents and have had a presence in the United States for over 175 years. With a presence in 22 states and 1 U. S. Territory, the Sisters and their Lay Mission Partners have dedicated themselves to serving girls, women and families who experience poverty, exploitation, vulnerability and marginalization.

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