



# Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

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December 18, 2019

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington DC, 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

I write today regarding Executive Order 13888, “*On Enhancing State and Local Involvement in Resettlement.*” As Governor of Wisconsin, I consent to initial refugee resettlement in Wisconsin as per the terms of Executive Order 13888.

Our state has a rich history of opening its doors to people of all backgrounds, experiences, and walks of life. Through the years, while the people seeking resettlement opportunity in Wisconsin have changed, their circumstances have not: they are people seeking a new life, they embrace American ideals, and they bring with them valuable skills and experience which benefit all of us.

Following the end of World War II, Wisconsin welcomed its first refugees as defined by the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention. Our state has since continued to offer opportunities for safety and a new life to those from around the world who are granted resettlement. Over the past two decades, Wisconsin has welcomed more than 16,000 refugees from countries around the world, including Laos, Vietnam, the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, and Iraq. Most recently, our state has welcomed people from Burma and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

I am disappointed that the administration has created an overly cumbersome and inappropriate process for those involved in refugee resettlement. Moreover, I am especially concerned that these actions and your administration’s general disposition and policies toward refugee and immigrant populations has already done immeasurable damage to key sectors of Wisconsin’s economy. Refugees and immigrants are essential to Wisconsin’s economy, from manufacturing to education, and public service to agriculture and healthcare. At a time when we are seeing labor shortages across our state, it is irresponsible for the administration to place obstacles in the path of talented and hard-working folks seeking refuge and a better life.

More broadly, and perhaps most importantly, our refugees are a critically important part of our families, our communities, and our culture—they are part of the fabric of our state. Wisconsin's refugee population is resilient and determined—they want to help themselves and their family, they want to continue working toward their dreams of living safely and freely, and they are eager to give back to the communities who welcome them. These contributions and our diversity and our differences make us and our state stronger, not weaker.

In Wisconsin, we believe in kindness, respect, empathy, and compassion—those are our Wisconsin values. Time and time again, I have watched Wisconsinites roll up their sleeves and help each other, rising to the call of our neighbors in their time of need. As we face that call today, Wisconsin will continue to proudly welcome refugees into our communities as we have for decades.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Evers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Evers  
Governor

cc: Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Carol T. O'Connell, Bureau of Population, Refugees,  
and Migration, U.S. Department of State