



THE UNITARIAN CHURCH OF BARNSTABLE

Unitarian Universalist

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Letter to: President Obama, Charlie Baker, Governor of Massachusetts, William Keating, Congressman 9th Congressional District, Elizabeth Warren, Senator from the State of Massachusetts, Ed Markey, Senator from Massachusetts, Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Massachusetts State Senators Daniel Wolf and Vinny deMacedo, Massachusetts State Representatives Tim Whelan, Brian Mannal, David Vieira, Timothy Madden, and Randy Hunt, Stan Rosenberg, President of the Massachusetts Senate, Robert DeLeo, Speaker of the Massachusetts House. Barnstable Massachusetts Town Council President Jessica Rapp Grasseti, and Vice President Ann Canedy

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are members and friends of The Unitarian Church of Barnstable, Massachusetts, and we are writing in support of the refugees who are fleeing their war-torn home in Syria. Americans pride themselves as a people of humanitarian principles. Now that those principles are being tested is not the time to abandon them. Our way of life is being challenged by an enemy who seems to hold one principle above all others: "Death to the infidels!" We need to continue to counter that with: "Life is precious and humankind is one!"

The challenge we face is to remain a compassionate and open society while protecting ourselves from this enemy. Of course, we must continue to ensure each refugee is who they claim to be. But, if we are so protective that we lose our identity, we wind up protecting a hollow shell of what we once were.

Therefore, we urge you to support the refugees and President Obama's promise to veto the recently passed bill (H.R. 4038, the American Security Against Foreign Enemies SAFE Act), which is designed to limit the acceptance of Syrian refugees. We hope the bill does not pass in the Senate, but if it does, we implore President Obama to veto it. As President Obama said: "We are not well served when, in response to a terrorist attack, we descend into fear and panic. We don't make good decisions if it's based on hysteria or an exaggeration of risks."

The bill is the reaction to terror that the terrorists want. The bill should not become law because, in the words of FBI Director James Comey it will make it virtually impossible to allow any refugees into the United States, and could make travel to the US difficult for citizens of many other countries. The xenophobic, fearful reaction by some of our leaders brings us closer to our terrorist enemies' characterization of us and strengthens their case against us, helping them use their strongest weapon – their ability to recruit new members.

Please support President Obama. Please work to find a way to accept and comfort as many Syrian refugees as possible while, at the same time, defending our country against the threat of terrorist attacks. It is your job to do so. Please don't shirk one set of responsibilities in the name of fulfilling another.

Signed by Members and Friends of The Unitarian Church of Barnstable