

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4004

May 4, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

Thank you for your response to my April 13, 2015, letter. This issue continues to be important to my constituents, and as their representative in Congress, it remains my job to get complete answers to the legitimate questions raised.

Toward that end, parts of your Agency's response lacked sufficient specificity. In an ongoing effort to better understand the process and public impact of the proposed resettlement of refugees in Spartanburg pursuant to the resettlement agency's proposal, several follow-up questions are listed below. I appreciate your prompt, substantive, and specific responses.

To begin, it is important to clarify and correct the timeline of events for the proposal. In your response you stated there were two community meetings, one in August 2014 and one in January 2015. You also stated the proposal was submitted in July 2014 and approved in November 2014. Is this correct? If so, does this mean the resettlement agency had only one community meeting, which occurred after the proposal was submitted and before the State Department's approval?

1) (a) Who, with specificity, were the "25 other individuals and church representatives" who "expressed their support for the resettlement program in Spartanburg"?

(b) Who specifically was consulted as part of the community and site assessment referenced in the timeline included in the proposal. Please include names and dates of the consultations where possible.

(c) Was anyone directly consulted in the South Carolina Governor's office other than Dorothy Addison, the State Refugee Coordinator? Who did Ms. Addison talk with as part of the community assessment in order to validate the resettlement agency's assessment of the community's ability to support the influx of refugees?

- 2) After the August 2014 meeting, who provided feedback on the proposal? Was this feedback included in the proposal although it had already been submitted? Which of South Carolina's United States Senators was contacted and did either provide feedback? Was Congressman Mick Mulvaney, whose district includes a portion of Spartanburg County, consulted?
- 3) Who were the "care providers" consulted as part of the community assessment? Please provide names and dates of consultations where possible.
- 4) Who were the local "public school representatives" consulted as part of the community assessment? Please provide names and dates of consultations where possible.
- 5) With whom did the resettlement agency meet to identify potential housing locations for the refugees? Please provide names and dates of consultations where possible.
- 6) (a) Is the per capita grant funding from the Department of State guaranteed for as long as there are refugees present?
- (b) What happens if the local resettlement agency, World Relief in this case, can no longer offer support services for the resettled refugees? Will the Department of State relocate the refugees? How much funding must the resettlement agency provide each year?
- 7) According to your response, there are nine refugees who may start arriving in Spartanburg in the next few months. What is the country of origin of each of these nine refugees?
- 8) (a) What advanced notification will be provided to the community after the "annual proposal process is conducted by PRM" to determine how many additional refugees will be resettled in the Spartanburg area in the coming years?
- (b) Must the State Refugee Coordinator sign off on any additional resettlement of refugees?
- (c) What individuals will be consulted for the annual proposal?
- (d) Who are the stakeholders that will be included in the ongoing community consultations? Please provide names where possible.
- 9) (a) Who generally will be part of the "Good Neighbor Teams"?
- (b) Who will oversee the refugees' access to public welfare benefits and/or assist them in job searches?
- (c) Will this be solely World Relief's role or will the South Carolina Department of Social Services play a role?

10) (a) What school district representatives did the resettlement agency consult with regarding the effect of minor refugees on Spartanburg's seven (7) school systems?

(b) Were the discussions with school principals or district superintendents?

(c) Did representatives of the school districts sign off on the resettlement? If so, please provide the names of the individuals.

(d) Precisely who in the Spartanburg school systems told World Relief there is "capacity for more students" in the system's already existing English immersion programs?

11) For what crimes, if any, can an individual be convicted and still be approved for U.S. refugee status? Do any of the nine refugees you indicated are currently slated for Spartanburg resettlement (or any who have subsequently been selected for resettlement) have such convictions?

12) How exactly are background checks performed on individuals seeking refugee resettlement in the United States? How can the background of an individual who is outside his country of origin be thoroughly investigated? Does the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) have access to background check procedures in the countries of origin of each of the individuals proposed to be resettled in Spartanburg?

13) (a) How do the national resettlement agencies "assess the capacity and environment" to determine the number of refugees a city can resettle? How is a "strong refugee program" quantified?

(b) Who must be included in the community consultation plan? Who is typically consulted in other communities?

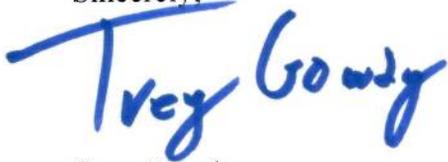
(c) Please provide any and all guidance provided to resettlement agencies by USRAP regarding the process that must be undertaken to get to the point of submitting a resettlement proposal, the ongoing process until the time of approval, and how a resettlement proposal should be conducted.

(d) Are local law enforcement officials part of the initial consultation and do they remain so once the resettled refugees are in the community? What, if any, efforts exist to track the refugees' interactions with local law enforcement officials?

14) How do you ensure long-term accountability on the part of any resettlement agency so the taxpayer is not ultimately left paying for the costs of refugee resettlement proposal?

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. This issue remains important to my constituents, and I will continue to work with you to get answers to all their questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Trey Gowdy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T" and a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Trey Gowdy