Dear President Obama:

We commend your decision to open America’s doors to at least 10,000 Syrian refugees displaced by civil war, and applaud your commitment to increase the overall number of refugees the U.S. will resettle over the course of the next two years. This announcement is a vital initial step to honoring America’s commitment to support those fleeing oppression.

As the mayors of cities across the country, we see first-hand the myriad ways in which immigrants and refugees make our communities stronger economically, socially and culturally. We will welcome the Syrian families to make homes and new lives in our cities. Indeed, we are writing to say that we stand ready to work with your Administration to do much more and to urge you to increase still further the number of Syrian refugees the United States will accept for resettlement. The surge of humanity fleeing war and famine is the largest refugee crisis since World War II. The United States is in a position to lead a global narrative of inclusion and support. This is a challenge we can meet, and the undersigned mayors stand ready to help you meet it.

Our cities have been transformed by the skills and the spirit of those who come to us from around the world. The drive and enterprise of immigrants and refugees have helped build our economies, enliven our arts and culture, and enrich our neighborhoods.

We have taken in refugees, and will help make room for thousands more. This is because the United States has developed a robust screening and background check that assures us that we know who we are welcoming into this country. With national security systems in place, we stand ready to support the Administration in increasing the numbers of refugees we can accept.

With Pope Francis’ visit, we are mindful of his call for greater compassion in the face of this ongoing crisis and stand with you in supporting those “journeying towards the hope of life.”

Sincerely,

Ed Pawlowski, Mayor of Allentown, PA

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor of Baltimore, MD

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston, MA

James Diossa, Mayor of Central Falls, RI

Mark Kleinschmidt, Mayor of Chapel Hill, NC

Rahm Emanuel, Mayor of Chicago, IL

Edward Terry, Mayor of Clarkston, GA

Nan Whaley, Mayor of Dayton, OH

Domenick Stampone, Mayor of Haledon, NJ

Pedro E. Segarra, Mayor of Hartford, CT

Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles, CA

Betsy Hodges, Mayor of Minneapolis, MN

Bill de Blasio, Mayor of New York City, NY

Jose Torres, Mayor of Paterson, NJ

William Peduto, Mayor of Pittsburgh, PA

Javier Gonzales, Mayor of Santa Fe, NM

Francis G. Slay, Mayor of St. Louis, MO

**Stephanie A. Miner, Mayor of Syracuse, NY**