



**REPRESENTATIVE BILL POST  
OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
HOUSE DISTRICT 25**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Representative Bill Post Responds To Governor Kate Brown's Statement  
Regarding Syrian Refugees**

**Salem, OR** – State Representative Bill Post (R-Keizer) issued the following response regarding Governor Kate Brown's statement related to Syrian refugees:

"I want to thank Governor Brown for her reply to my letter dated 11-16-15, and also for the FAQ sheet. I am glad that she shares my concern for the welfare of those being persecuted for their religious beliefs and that the United States and Oregon can be a safe place for them. I also hope that she will regularly confer with federal authorities as well as other governors on the implementation of the screening process. My biggest concern is for the safety of Oregonians and it appears that this will be handled by the Department of Human Services. I hope that DHS will report to the legislature and the people of Oregon on their vetting process as we move forward in this situation."

**###**



KATE BROWN  
Governor

November 17, 2015

The Honorable Bill Post  
State Representative  
District 25

Dear Representative Post:

Clearly, Oregon will continue to accept refugees vetted by federal authorities – they bring their hopes and dreams to America, and we will continue to open the doors of opportunity to them. The words on the Statue of Liberty apply in Oregon just as they do in every other state.

The Syrian people will deal with the realities of war for the rest of their lives and for generations to come. I share your belief in the importance of the United States, and specifically Oregon, offering safe haven for those suffering from persecution to build a new and safer life. As Oregonians, it is our moral obligation to help them rebuild their lives.

In Oregon we will continue to abide by federal laws regarding resettlement. Oregon does not have a direct role or act independently of the federal government. The State Department is responsible for the overarching coordination and management of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, including the decision on which refugees are granted access to theUSRAP for resettlement consideration. The Department of Homeland Security, through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services works in close partnership with the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, and is responsible for conducting individual, in-person interviews with applicants to determine their eligibility for refugee status, including whether they meet the refugee definition and are otherwise admissible to the United States under U.S. law.

In Oregon, the Department of Human Services Child Care and Refugee Programs works with local "voluntary organizations" which are responsible for initial resettlement of refugees. If you need more information, please contact Dani Ledezma my Health and Human Services policy advisor. I have attached the Oregon Department of Human Services' FAQ for your information.

Sincerely,

Governor Kate Brown



**Oregon Department of Human Services  
Child Care and Refugee Programs  
Syrian Refugee Crisis Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is the role of Oregon DHS in the Syrian Refugee Crisis?**

The U.S. response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis is handled at the federal level. Oregon DHS does not have a direct role or act independently of the federal government.

Here's how it works:

- The U.S. Congress and President set the policy that determines which refugees and how many are received in the U.S.
- The federal Department of State contracts with national resettlement agencies to provide resettlement services to refugees. These agencies have local affiliates in various states and resettle refugees according to their local capacity. Refugees either ask to be resettled in a particular state where they may have relatives, friends or contacts, or the national voluntary agencies resettle refugees based on the capacity of their local affiliates.
- The local organizations, known as "voluntary organizations," are responsible for the initial resettlement of refugees for a period of 90 days. They also have contracts with Oregon DHS for services to refugees for a maximum of 8 months.
- Oregon DHS provides up to eight months of cash assistance and employability services to newly arrived refugee families and married couples who qualify for its Refugee Program. Oregon DHS tracks only those participating in its short-term Refugee Program.

**Are there any Syrian refugees in Oregon now?**

Our local voluntary agencies have been expecting to receive Syrian refugees but in 2015, have received only one so far. The local voluntary organizations may have more information.

Oregon DHS collects information on the country of origin for refugees who arrive directly to Oregon from overseas. New categories are created for new countries of origin when there are large enough numbers. Right now, we do not have enough Syrian refugees for its own tracking category.

**If Oregon begins receiving more Syrian refugees, how would Oregon DHS react?**

The Oregon DHS programs and processes for providing services to Syrians resettled in Oregon would be the same as they are now for refugees from other places. However, the local voluntary organizations responsible for resettlement of refugees in Oregon may adjust their strategies to meet the need.

**Who are the local Voluntary Resettlement Agencies in Oregon?**

The majority of refugees in Oregon are initially resettled in the Portland Metro area of Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. The Voluntary Agencies include:

- [Catholic Charities](#) (CC)
- [Lutheran Community Services Northwest](#) (LCSNW)

- [Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees \(SOAR\)](#)/Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO)

English language, vocational training, employment supports, and job placement services are provided through the [Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization \(IRCO\)](#) to refugees for their first 12 months of residence in the U.S.

Refugees who reside outside Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas Counties are served in the [local DHS branch office](#) for cash assistance and SNAP while referrals are made to locally contracted agencies for Employment Services and to Oregon Health Authority for medical coverage.

**I want to help Syrian refugees. What can I do?**

Although Oregon has just a few Syrian refugees at the moment, they and others from many countries may need your help. Contact a local voluntary organization to see how you can contribute. All have established donor and volunteer programs.