

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 4, 2017

American Bar Association House of Delegates
321 North Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60654

Dear Members of the ABA House of Delegates:

We write to urge you to approve the proposed Connecticut Bar Association resolution on refugees. Providing humanitarian relief and legal protection to refugees who have been displaced by violence is not a choice, but an ethical obligation. Refugees are already subject to an appropriate vetting process – the most stringent of any visa applicant, often taking several years. Those who have survived the horrors of the Syrian crisis and oppression around the world have already suffered tremendously. Previous generations of refugees who have reached these shores have gone on to become upstanding members of our society. The fact that those seeking our help today may have a different religion or national origin than those who came yesterday makes them no different. It is simply not in keeping with American generosity and commitment to the rule of law to slam the door in the faces of victims of turmoil.

The obligation to ensure refugees and similarly vulnerable migrants receive humane treatment and legal protection is particularly strong for attorneys. Regardless of career path – government prosecutor, public defender, civil litigator, elected official – we are all committed to upholding the rule of law. When hatred is allowed to transform the law into a means of separating children from their parents and returning those who have escaped torture to their torturer, our entire profession suffers. When the Constitutional principle of non-discrimination is abandoned, our entire justice system is weakened.

This resolution reflects the values embedded in our Constitution and on the base of the Statute of Liberty. It makes no partisan statement, but simply reaffirms the moral imperative and long standing American tradition of extending a hand to those in need, regardless of their nationality or religion. Attorneys must stand up to guarantee that hatred and fear never succeed in denying those who have been forced to flee their country the aid and safety that has made the United States a global beacon of hope.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate