



January 20, 2016

The Honorable Ron Johnson
United States Senate
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-4905

The Honorable Tom Carper
United States Senate
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0803

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Carper,

I note with interest that the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will devote its January 27th meeting to discuss Canada's response to the refugee crisis in Syria. I hope the information included here will help inform your discussion and answer any questions you may have.

Canada and the United States both have a proud humanitarian tradition that includes a strong commitment to refugee resettlement. Our two countries have long worked together in responding to humanitarian crises, as we did in the latter half of the 20th century welcoming refugees fleeing oppressive regimes in Hungary, Vietnam and Cambodia. We have also worked together on the airlift of Kosovar refugees in 1999, and more recently following the Haiti earthquake in 2010.

Protecting the security of Canadians, and by extension our American neighbours, while also providing protection to individuals who have been devastated by the war in Syria are key factors guiding the Government of Canada's refugee resettlement plan. Rest assured that no corners, including security screening, are being cut in order to achieve the Government's objectives. Rather, the government has devoted significant resources to this effort, which includes the deployment of military, law enforcement, immigration and border security officers. In keeping with our focus on security, you should know that:

- Each refugee undergoes multiple security screenings at one of our overseas operations centers.
 - This includes the collection of biographic information and biometrics, which are checked against Canadian and U.S. immigration, law enforcement and security databases.
 - Each applicant is also interviewed by a professional, experienced visa officer.
- If Canadian officials have any concerns whatsoever, an application is set aside – zero tolerance.
- Applicants' identification and biometrics are checked and re-checked throughout the screening process, including before boarding planes for Canada and again upon arrival.

- Canada is prioritizing vulnerable refugees who are a low security risk, such as women at risk and complete families. This is consistent with Canada's overall approach to refugee resettlement.
- Once in Canada, the refugees will not be free to travel to the United States. They will require a visa to travel to the U.S.

As refugees arrive in Canada, they are provided with immediate, essential services and long-term settlement support to ensure their successful integration into Canadian society. Since November 24, 2015, Canadians have welcomed over 10,000 refugees.

I would like to take this opportunity to also point out the existing strong cooperation between our two countries on information sharing, making operational improvements at the border, and denying terrorists the ability to use either country as a transit point or to circumvent restrictions imposed by the other. Together, we have implemented a number of measures to support the safety and integrity of our shared border, including:

- An automated capability to exchange visa and immigration information, which reduces identity fraud and enhances eligibility and admissibility decisions before applicants arrive in North America;
- Cross-border maritime law enforcement teams, "Shipriders", consisting of U.S. Coast Guard and RCMP officers, that transit back and forth across the international boundary line to enforce the law on both sides of the border;
- Integrated Border Enforcement Teams that bring together Canadian and U.S. law enforcement in 24 locations along our border to jointly manage land, air and marine environments between ports of entry; and
- The sharing of entry/exit information along our shared land border on non-citizens in a secure and systematic fashion.

It's important to remember that the 9/11 Commission, created by Congress and the President, concluded that none of the hijackers entered the U.S. through Canada. Securing our North American neighborhood against security threats is a shared responsibility and a permanent priority for both countries.

Should you have any questions on our security cooperation with the United States, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Doer', written over a horizontal line.

Gary Doer
Ambassador

cc: The Honorable Kelly Ayotte
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
The Honorable Cory A. Booker
The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
The Honorable Joni Ernst
The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp
The Honorable James Lankford
The Honorable John McCain
The Honorable Claire McCaskill
The Honorable Rand Paul
The Honorable Gary Peters
The Honorable Rob Portman
The Honorable Ben Sasse
The Honorable Jon Tester