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October 24, 2019

President Donald J. Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Thank you for your willingness to work with governors and solicit our input and expertise on policies that impact states.

I write today in response to your recent executive order regarding refugee resettlement policies and your expressed desire to work more closely with state and local leaders. I encourage you to allow us to accept more international refugees in Utah. We have historically accepted and resettled more than 1,000 refugees each year from a variety of troubled regions of the world. Unfortunately, that number has dropped for the past two years and is on track to decrease more this year. We know the need has not decreased and are eager to see the number of admittances rise again.

Utah's unique history informs our approach to refugees. Our state was founded by religious refugees fleeing persecution in the Eastern United States. Those experiences and hardships of our pioneer ancestors 170 years ago are still fresh in the minds of many Utahns. As a result we empathize deeply with individuals and groups who have been forced from their homes and we love giving them a new home and a new life.

And it turns out we do it quite well. Those refugees who resettle in Utah become integrated and accepted into our communities. They become productive employees and responsible citizens. They become contributors in our schools, churches and other civic institutions, even helping serve more recent refugees and thus generating a beautiful cycle of charity. This marvelous compassion is simply embedded into our state's culture.

I also recognize that there is a logical limit to how many refugees can be successfully integrated into a state or nation in a given period of time. However, in Utah we are far from reaching that limit. We work closely with our local resettlement agencies and many faith based organizations, and we have the capacity and public will to resettle and integrate at least as many refugees as we have in the past.

Sincerely and best wishes,

Gary R. Herbert
Governor