

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROBERT BENTLEY  
GOVERNOR



STATE CAPITOL  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

(334) 242-7100  
FAX: (334) 242-3282

## STATE OF ALABAMA

November 17, 2015

*Via Email and U.S. Mail*

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

Respectfully, I write to inform you that I have exercised my emergency powers as Governor to protect the citizens and property of the State of Alabama by signing Executive Order 14. This Executive Order directs Alabama's state agencies not to participate in the resettlement of Syrian refugees within the State of Alabama. Pursuant to this directive, Alabama will not participate in the relocation of Syrian refugees to Alabama through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program or otherwise accept Syrian refugees. A copy of my Executive Order is enclosed.

The threat posed by the Syrian refugees is foreseeable and real. The introduction of Syrian refugees into the United States without proper prior screening and follow-up monitoring could result in a threat to the citizens and property of Alabama. As Governor, I simply cannot expose my fellow Alabamians to the risk of accepting refugees from Syria, whose backgrounds cannot properly be checked to ensure national security. Testimony before Congress by the Director of the FBI acknowledges that the federal government does not have the background information necessary to effectively conduct security checks on Syrian nationals to vet those entering our borders. Director James B. Comey testified, "We can query our database until the cows come home, but there will be nothing [that] show[s] up because we have no record of them."

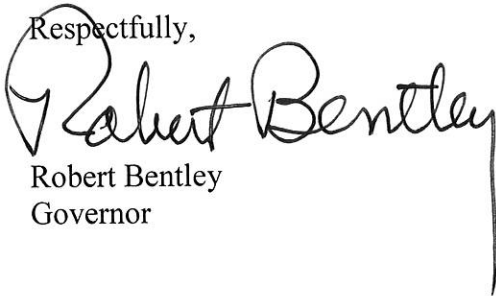
The tragic attacks in Paris over the weekend resulting in the deaths of more than 120 people and harm to at least 350 others, conducted by Islamic extremists, at least one of whom is a recent Syrian refugee, both prompt and support my action to protect Alabama citizens. I will not place Alabamians at even the slightest, possible risk of an attack on our people by accepting these refugees who may be connected to terrorism. Without a definitive means of confirming that these refugees are not connected to terrorist activities, I simply will not stand complicit to a policy that places Alabama citizens in harm's way.

November 17, 2015

Page 2

For these reasons, Alabama will not participate in the resettlement of the Syrian refugees. Further, I ask you to reconsider your plans for resettlement of more Syrian refugees in the United States. The acts of terror committed over the weekend are a tragic reminder to the world that evil exists and takes the form of terrorists who seek to destroy the basic freedoms we will always fight to preserve. It is clear that the United States is not prepared to handle the resettlement of Syrian refugees, and one mistake by the Federal Government in allowing a refugee with a terrorist connection poses a major safety threat to our people. Failure to change course exposes millions of Americans to the possibility of terrorist acts on American soil.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Bentley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "R".

Robert Bentley  
Governor

## EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 14

**WHEREAS**, Article V, Section 113 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901 establishes that the supreme executive power of this State shall be vested in a Chief Magistrate who shall be styled “the Governor of the State of Alabama”;

**WHEREAS**, the grant of “supreme executive authority” to the Governor carries the charge that the Governor “take care that the laws be faithfully executed”;

**WHEREAS**, the Alabama Constitution establishes that during times of emergency or threat of emergency, the Governor has emergency powers to protect the citizens and property of the State of Alabama;

**WHEREAS**, when the threat of an emergency is foreseeable, it is prudent to implement common sense and precautionary measures to prevent the occurrence of an emergency which threatens the life and property of Alabama citizens;

**WHEREAS**, on Friday, November 13, 2015, more than 120 people were killed and 350 others wounded in a coordinated series of terrorist attacks in Paris, France;

**WHEREAS**, these attacks were conducted by Islamic extremists, at least one of them a recent Syrian refugee, and the radical terrorist group, Islamic State (ISIS), claimed responsibility;

**WHEREAS**, the Director of the FBI has testified to Congress that the federal government does not have the background information that is necessary to effectively conduct security checks on Syrian nationals;

**WHEREAS**, as your Governor, I will oppose any attempt to relocate Syrian refugees to Alabama through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and I will not stand complicit to a policy that places the citizens of Alabama in harm’s way; and

**WHEREAS**, it is foreseeable that the introduction of Syrian refugees into the United States without proper prior screening and follow-up monitoring could result in a threat to the citizens and property of Alabama.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Robert Bentley, Governor of the State of Alabama, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Alabama, and for other good and valid reasons, do hereby order and direct as follows:

**BE IT ORDERED**, that all departments, budget units, agencies, offices, entities, and officers of the executive branch of the State of Alabama are authorized and directed to utilize all lawful means to prevent the resettlement of Syrian refugees in the State of Alabama until this order is rescinded;

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that I am directing the Alabama Department of Human Resources and the Alabama Department of Public Health not to participate in the resettlement of any Syrian refugees in the State of Alabama;

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA), upon receiving information that a Syrian refugee is already located within the State of Alabama, is authorized and directed to utilize all lawful means to monitor and avert threats within the State of Alabama;

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that this Executive Order is effective November 16, 2015, and shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by the Governor, or terminated by operation of law.

**DONE AND ORDERED**, this the 16th day of November, 2015.



*Robert Bentley*  
Robert Bentley  
Governor

ATTEST:

*J. H. Merrill*  
John H. Merrill  
Secretary of State