

Resolution on Refugee Resettlement

WHEREAS, Jesus clearly states in Matthew 25:35, “For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me”; and

WHEREAS, the work of Lutheran social ministries is rooted in this call to hospitality and care; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC) is one of the affiliates of Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, LIRS) that resettles legally vetted refugees from across the world in South and North Carolina. Individuals are granted legal “refugee” status by the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and the US government (DHS--Department of Homeland Security, USCIS--US Citizenship and Immigration Services, along with the Department of State) through an intensive, multi-step process, and are then referred to LSC for placement; and

WHEREAS, Ted W. Goins, Jr., LSC President and CEO, remarked “the resettlement of legal refugees through LSC’s New Americans Program is consistent with our biblical foundation and American values”; and

WHEREAS, in this country, one in 50 Americans is served through a Lutheran Social Ministry. These social ministries provide food, clothing, behavioral health lifelines and many more essentials for disaster victims, children in foster care impacted by trauma, those fighting for recovery, and the less fortunate in our society; and

WHEREAS, the finances of organizations like Lutheran Services Carolinas are public information, and anyone can view the 990 forms on the organization’s website at www.lscarolinas.net. Form 990 is a United States IRS form that provides the public with financial information about a nonprofit organization; and

WHEREAS, on January 24, 2025, LSC, Global Refuge and other resettlement organizations across the country were notified of the stop-work order halting the longstanding, bipartisan-supported resettlement of legal refugees; and

WHEREAS, there are tens of thousands of refugees who have already been approved by an extensive vetting process and are now stranded overseas. Many of these refugees have lived in refugee camps for more than 20 years or are now the second generation living in refugee camps waiting for their applications to be reviewed; and

WHEREAS, the work of Lutheran Services Carolinas’ New Americans Program has been a hallmark of its services for over 25 years in South Carolina. LSC has worked with the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement and, as an affiliate of Global Refuge, to help immigrants and refugees successfully integrate into communities across South and North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, refugees arrive with little more than the clothes on their backs, relying on resettlement organizations like LSC for assistance with housing, healthcare access, English education, school enrollment, and job placement. Since January 2025, these services have been stripped away from the recently arrived refugees who have come to the United States; and

WHEREAS, Refugee resettlement is a shared responsibility between federal, state, and local partners, and without swift action, countless families face devastating uncertainty; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA’s social message on Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy states “ELCA social teaching holds that all residents of the United States have a responsibility to make government function well--not to abandon our democracy but to engage it in a spirit of robust civic duty”; therefore, be it

Resolved, that, the SC Synod, gathered in Assembly on June 12-14 2025, be encouraged to advocate the good work of Lutheran Services Carolinas through prayer, financial support, volunteer work, and/or communication with elected representatives; and be it further

Resolved, that the Office of the Bishop and the SC Synod Council send letters to all SC congressional representatives, senators, and the White House, calling on policymakers from South Carolina to urge the White House and Congress to reinstate these vital services immediately; and be it further

Resolved, that the Office of the Bishop of the SC Synod send correspondence to congregations urging all members of Synod congregations to stand in solidarity with legal refugees and immigrants by contacting their SC congressional representative and senators to urge the White House and Congress to reinstate these vital services immediately. Furthermore, this correspondence shall urge members to prayerfully support Lutheran Services Carolinas and Global Refuge in the holy work of welcoming the stranger, helping resettle refugees vetted and entrusted to our care by the US government, with or without the government's financial assistance; and be it further

Resolved, that the Office of the Bishop of the SC Synod and SC Synod Council send correspondence to the Presiding Bishop and Secretary of the ELCA; to state leaders of our Full Communion partners as well as to the statewide leaders of other faith traditions communicating this resolution and encouraging them to also contact elected leaders; and be it finally

Resolved, that the contact information (to find your representative click here: [Find Your Representative/house.gov](https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative)) for all congressional representatives and senators be included with the correspondence to each congregation.

Adopted by South Carolina Synod Assembly, June 12-14, 2025