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Welcoming Refugees: The Right and Legal Thing to Do

January 16, 2020—"Refugee resettlement activity should go forward as it developed for ... almost 40 years," wrote U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte, in today's order temporarily halting President Trump's September executive order. The executive order requires states and counties to formally state that they will accept refugees; otherwise, refugee resettlement in those jurisdictions would be barred.

Three resettlement agencies, and Attorneys General in several states, including Minnesota, sued to block the executive order. Judge Messitte found it likely that the executive order is unlawful, and ordered that it not be enforced while litigation continues.

"The executive order erected an unlawful barrier to refugee resettlement, and unfortunately, [in places like Beltrami County, it has resulted in widespread misinformation campaigns about our refugee neighbors.](#)" said Veena Iyer, executive director of the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM). "Judge Messitte's order allows the continuation of what the judge accurately characterized as 'the longstanding, carefully crafted humane program that places refugees in communities where they can thrive.'"

Refugee resettlement is not a partisan issue. At least 42 state governors, including many Republican governors, said yes to refugee resettlement in their states. At least 20 Minnesota counties have also voted to accept refugees, carrying on our state's tradition of welcoming individuals and families fleeing persecution.