

Rep. Moss offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 14.

A resolution to denounce anti-refugee policies and urge the President of the United States to reverse his executive order blocking refugees from entering the United States.

Whereas, Political figures in the United States have long been inundated with the question of refugee admittance. In 1783, General George Washington, in an address to the Volunteer Association of Ireland, declared that “the bosom of America is open to receive not only the Opulent and respectable Stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations and Religions.” In keeping with American values, modern presidents have used immigration policy to grant relief to refugees, cultivate alliances, and signal to the world the tolerance of a great nation; and

Whereas, The anti-refugee rhetoric exhibited during the 2016 presidential election was despicable and inconsistent with core American beliefs. Aimed at dehumanizing and labeling refugees seeking shelter from the Middle East, some American political figures riled up raw emotion in the electorate using arguments not rooted in fact in order to halt the flow of refugees coming into the United States for short-term political gain; and

Whereas, The President’s administration has begun transitioning his shameful campaign rhetoric into federal policy. Measures announced recently suspend the admittance of refugees into the United States for 120 days, ban all Syrian refugees from entering the United States indefinitely, and prevent any citizen from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States for 90 days. This executive order—tantamount to the racially and religiously profiling of nations—has been denounced as unconstitutional and un-American by numerous state attorneys general, and has been suspended, in part, by several federal judges; and

Whereas, Looking back on American history, we must be reminded of the dangerous falsehoods, misinformation, and stereotypes peddled by anti-refugee politicians that harken back to some of the darkest periods of time in the United States and the world. Nearly eight decades ago, a German transatlantic liner, the St. Louis, carrying 937 passengers sought refuge on Liberty’s shore from the Third Reich. This mostly Jewish-occupied transport was denied entry into the United States because of fearmongering political leaders who lacked the political will and moral courage to assist these refugees due to their religious practices. Refused entry, the St. Louis returned to Nazi-occupied Europe where more than 500 passengers were trapped, and nearly half of those passengers perished in the Holocaust; and

Whereas, American political leaders must learn from the political and moral shortcomings of our past or be destined to repeat history. Refugees from Syria and other unstable parts of the world are seeking relief and safety from violently oppressive governments and terrorist organizations. These individuals and their families have asked the United States for the cloak of safety and security, and in keeping with the best traditions of this nation and our standing in the world, our political leaders should extend the unclenched hand of freedom to those who have been displaced by circumstance and their own government; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we denounce anti-refugee policies and urge the President of the United States to reverse his executive order blocking refugees from entering the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of the Michigan Legislature will work to promote these words engraved on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."