

HARTSVILLE/TROUSDALE COUNTY METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

RESOLUTION # 2020-05-680

RESOLUTION OF NO CONSENT TO REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN TROUSDALE COUNTY

WHEREAS, the President issued the Presidential Determination on the Admission of Refugees for FY2020, setting the admission cap at 18,000; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Democrat Governor Phil Bredesen withdrew Tennessee from the federal refugee resettlement program; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, with overwhelming support in the State House and the Senate, the Tennessee General Assembly passed SJR467 and subsequently filed a lawsuit which is on-going challenging the federal refugee resettlement program for violating the Tenth Amendment; and

WHEREAS, generally, the lawsuit alleges the commandeering of state funds to pay costs associated with the refugee resettlement program which have been shifted to the state without its consent by the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the transferred federal costs are ultimately being paid by Tennessee state taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, President Trump issued Executive Order 13888, *Enhancing State and Local Involvement in Refugee Resettlement* which requires written consent from both the Governor and the chief executive officer of the local government (county or county equivalent) for the initial resettlement of refugees into specific communities; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration has operationalized the consent requirement through the FY2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity for Reception and Placement Program (Funding Notice) issued on November 6, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Funding Notice permits federally contracted refugee resettlement agencies to resettle different groups of refugees anywhere from 50 to 100 miles away from the resettlement agency offices in consenting counties such that non-consenting counties cities and towns can be forced to participate in the initial resettlement of refugees; and

WHEREAS, refugee resettlement agencies maintain offices and operations in Davidson, Shelby, Hamilton and Knox counties; and

WHEREAS, John Cooper, Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County has issued a letter of consent to U.S. Secretary Mike Pompeo and it is anticipated that Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris, Knox County Glen Jacobs and Hamilton County Mayor Jim Coppinger will do the same; and

WHEREAS, U.S. State Department reports show that upon arrival refugees have previously been resettled in locations including Clarksville, Lavergne, Smyrna, Murfreesboro, Mt. Juliet, Franklin, Spring Hill, Shelbyville, Gallatin, Johnson City; and

WHEREAS, Governor Lee by letter dated December 18, 2019, to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo "per the terms of Executive Order 13888" has consented to "initial refugee resettlement in Tennessee" with no exemption for non-consenting counties; and

WHEREAS, by letter dated December 18, 2019, to Lt. Governor Randy McNally and House Speaker Cameron Sexton Governor Lee defines his consent as "valid initially for one year" in conflict with the terms of Executive Order 13888 and the Funding Notice which only requires consent for the period of time June 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020; now, therefore,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Hartsville/Trousdale County, Tennessee that Hartsville/Trousdale County does not want to be forced into participating in the federal refugee resettlement program due to either Governor Lee's consent and/or being within the permissible placement radius of a resettlement agency office.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Hartsville/Trousdale County Commission requests that Governor Lee retract his consent for initial resettlement in Tennessee for both the one-year period as stated in his letter and/or the actual consent period required by the Funding Notice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Hartsville/Trousdale County Commission requests that in the event Governor Lee does not retract his consent for initial refugee resettlement, that he submit a revised letter of consent to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and to Lt. Governor Randy McNally and House Speaker Cameron Sexton exempting non-consenting counties from forced participation in the initial resettlement of refugees in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Hartsville/Trousdale County Commission requests that Governor Lee by written notice inform the resettlement agencies which maintain offices and operations in Tennessee that they may not place arriving refugees in non-consenting counties.

Sponsored by: Commission Chairman Dwight A. Jewell, and Commissioner Rachel Jones.


Motion to approve: David Nollner **Show of Hands**
Second motion: Rachel Jones YES 17 NO 3 ABSENT 0

APPROVED AND ADOPTED FEBRUARY 24TH, 2020

APPROVED:


Dwight Jewell
Commission Chair

ATTEST:


Rita Crowder
County Clerk