

RON WYDEN
OREGON

RANKING MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE

221 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5244

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3703

January 30, 2017

COMMITTEES:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

The Hon. Tom Price
1211 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Price:

On January 27, 2017, the President of the United States undermined a fundamental American value by closing our doors to those fleeing terror, persecution, and death. In signing the Executive Order entitled, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry to the United States" the president sent a message to the world that our country is no longer a welcome place for refugees and asylum seekers. The Executive Order not only targets seven Muslim-majority countries with new travel restrictions, but also creates a religious test for refugees, suggesting this country should be more welcoming of some faiths than others.

Any religious test for refugees is not only morally abhorrent, but it is also unconstitutional, un-American and makes our country less safe. Banning refugees who are fleeing persecution is unequivocally contrary to who we are as Americans and the very reasons our country was founded. The repugnant argument that closing our borders to people who seek help somehow makes us safer is a fallacy sold to Americans at the highest cost. This ban gives fodder to those seeking to weaken and attack America and American values.

If confirmed, you will be responsible for overseeing the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The responsibility of ORR is to assist refugees with the resettlement process once they have legally gained entry to the United States. Given the actions of this administration over the past week, I believe the Senate Finance Committee deserves answers related to your potential leadership over this office.

Please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Were you consulted by the president or anyone in this administration before this executive action was taken?
 - a. If so, did you advise the president/the White House that it was unconstitutional based on its preference for one religion over another and unlawful based on its distinction by nationalities? How do you square your answer with the commitments you made at your hearing to uphold the laws made by Congress?
 - b. If not, would you have advised him/the White House that it was unconstitutional based on its preference for one religion over another and unlawful based on its distinction by nationalities? How do you square your answer with the commitments you made at your hearing to uphold the laws made by Congress?

911 NE 11TH AVENUE
SUITE 630
PORTLAND, OR 97232
(503) 326-7525

405 EAST 8TH AVE
SUITE 2020
EUGENE, OR 97401
(541) 431-0229

SAC ANNEX BUILDING
105 FIR ST
SUITE 201
LA GRANDE, OR 97850
(541) 962-7691

U.S. COURTHOUSE
310 WEST 6TH ST
ROOM 118
MEDFORD, OR 97501
(541) 858-5122

THE JAMISON BUILDING
131 NW HAWTHORNE AVE
SUITE 107
BEND, OR 97701
(541) 330-9142

707 13TH ST, SE
SUITE 285
SALEM, OR 97301
(503) 589-4555

[HTTP://WYDEN.SENATE.GOV](http://wyden.senate.gov)

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

2. Do you have any experience in refugee resettlement or the international refugee program?
3. Did you advise/ would you have advised the president of the long record of success of the U.S. refugee resettlement program, including the record of safety, extensive screening process, absence of violence or terrorism, and major contributions to U.S. society? Do you agree that the role of the Secretary of HHS as leader of the resettlement activities is to provide this evidence?
4. Do you commit to listening closely to the expertise of the experienced career professionals in the Office of Refugee Resettlement and transmitting their views faithfully to the other involved agencies and to the president, as has traditionally been the role of the HHS Secretary?
5. Do you believe the Executive Order creates a (either short-term or long-term) Muslim ban on refugees into this country?
6. In its Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations legislation, Congress provided funding to the Office of Refugee resettlement to support the resettlement of 75,000 refugees. However, the president's Executive Order greatly limits the number of refugees that can enter the United States. If confirmed, how would you ensure congressional intent with respect to current law is upheld? Specifically, how will you work with your colleagues at the Departments of State and Homeland Security to ensure at least 75,000 refugees are served in this fiscal year?
7. The U.S. resettlement program and vetting of refugees is a long and exhaustive process that involves international institutions as well as the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security, State, and Health and Human Services. It appears that the White House made a unilateral decision regarding the refugee resettlement program, including decisions regarding regional allocations, without consultation from the experts of various agencies with extensive experience in this area. In your view, has the White House inappropriately taken on this role without consulting the available expertise? If confirmed, will you commit to a fair and transparent process in the future?

Thank you for your attention to these important and timely questions. I ask that you provide written answers in advance of the full Senate's vote on your nomination.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance