

August 22, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We write as members of the Michigan business community – employers of all sizes and across industries – to express our support for refugees resettling in the United States. We urge you to consider the positive contributions refugees make in our communities as you determine the number of refugee entries for fiscal year 2020.

Refugees are vital to the continuing prosperity of our communities – they pay taxes, help grow our economy, and bring unique skillsets, experiences, and insights. They improve our state’s quality of life and are helping shape Michigan’s opportunities for continued growth. Collectively, we have hired over 5,000 refugees since 2009 through our partnership with Bethany Christian Services.

Bethany is an international child and family protection organization, headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We support their mission to protect and enhance the lives of children and families around the world. To serve refugee families resettling in the United States, Bethany has a network of nearly 500 businesses that employ refugees, helping them thrive in our community as productive and contributing residents. We value our refugee employees, and we hope to continue hiring refugees for years to come.

Because of the employment services Bethany provides refugees, we have been able to hire dedicated workers who often have the desire and ability to move up in our companies. We have found that refugees are hardworking, motivated, and loyal employees. In addition, many refugees have contributed to West Michigan’s rich culture by starting their own businesses.

The contributions refugees make to our communities have helped West Michigan thrive. In 2018, Bethany’s Refugee Employment Program placed 349 refugees with over 100 employers, a sharp decline from past years because fewer refugees were resettled. Last year, these refugees collectively earned approximately \$9 million, barely half of what refugees earned and contributed to the West Michigan economy in 2017.

We are proud that the United States has a reputation of providing help to refugees – to those who have suffered from persecution because of their faith, ethnicity, or political beliefs. Not only does resettling refugees advance our nation’s historic ability to provide protection, ease suffering, and resolve the plight of persecuted and uprooted people, it strengthens our communities.

Thank you for considering our views and experience.

Sincerely,

Advance Packaging Corporation
Allow Therapy Partners
Belmont Engineered Plastics
Burco, Inc
Byrne Electrical Specialists
Coastal Careers, Inc.
Creative Dining Services
Eenhoorn, LLC
Forge Industrial Staffing
Gill Industries
Grand Rapids Chamber of
Commerce
Hascall Steel Company

Hastings Manufacturing
Haworth, Inc.
Heeren, LLC
HexArmor
Hope Network Industries
JBS USA
Lacks Enterprises
Master Finish
Meyers Cleaning Service, Inc
MNM Transport Services LLC
MOKA
NaTakallam
Notions Marketing Corporation

Orange Scooter Designs
Profile Films
Rapid-Line
SalonCentric
Schupan & Sons, Inc.
Sewest Michigan
Steelcase Inc.
Suburban Inns
The DECC Company
Unist, Inc.
West Michigan Beef Co. LLC