



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## First legislation proposed to deal with refugee crisis

TERRENCE MURPHY December 1, 2015



NEW YORK, NY - Emma Lazarus would be proud, as lawmakers today proposed legislation to address the controversy stemming from the potential influx of refugees from war torn Syria. State Senator Terrence Murphy, author of the proposal, says he has found a way to strike a balance between humanitarian need and security concerns.

"It is crucial that we take reasonable measures to protect our state's residents while working within the confines of federal law, and continuing to provide humanitarian relief," Senator Murphy said. "While the state may lack the ability to block refugees from coming here, we do

have the authority and a responsibility to begin tracking who these people are, where they are coming from, and to monitor the situation for potential threats unless and until such time as they are granted permanent residency by the federal government."

Under federal current law, not-for-profits known as "voluntary agencies" work with the federal government to resettle refugee applicants.

The state's Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (BRIA) is only made aware of such resettlements when the refugee applies for assistance programs that are administered by the state, and no security checks are performed, Murphy said.

"My bill allows New York to create its own mechanism to properly vet and monitor individuals seeking asylum within the state's borders while continuing necessary humanitarian efforts by requiring refugees admitted by the federal government, to register, interview and provide fingerprints," Murphy said. "The state will perform background checks on all individuals seeking refugee status, monitor these individuals for any indications of terrorism and deny the issuance of state funded public assistance to individuals who fail to comply. We need to trust, but verify, especially when the federal government is refusing to take further action at this time."

Under the legislation proposed by Senator Murphy:

- Not-for-profit voluntary agencies are required to provide monthly reports to the BRIA on the number of refugees resettled in New York, their age group, and country of origin;
- the BRIA is required to notify refugees of the requirement to register within 30 days, and take fingerprints from all registrants;
- the Office of New Americans is tasked with performing background screenings on all registrants; and

- the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services will monitor all refugees admitted for potential terroristic activity until they are granted a green card by the federal government."

State Senator Thomas D. Croci is a co-prime sponsor of the bill. Senator Croci is a Commander in the United States Navy Reserve and serves as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs, where the legislation was referred.

"Our greatest efforts should be aimed at helping these families fight terrorism and anarchy in their home nations," Senator Croci said. "If the President and the Governor decide to continue to admit these individuals, then this legislation will be essential to ensure that we monitor how these agencies are vetting and keeping track of those who enter our country."

Yesterday, Gannett's national bureau reported that the White House has offered to provide a state-specific report on refugee resettlement similar to what resettlement agencies would be required to provide under the new law. A front page article in the Wall Street Journal noted extremist recruiters have been targeting refugees in Germany.

Action on the bill could be taken when the Legislature returns to session in January.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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**2015-S6253**

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- Introduced
  - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Requires residents of the state, who are foreign refugees, to register with the office of temporary and disability assistance

December 01, 2015

In Senate Committee **Finance**

Sponsored by **Terrence Murphy**

Do you support this bill?