

2017-K630

Assembly Resolution No. 630

BY: M. of A. Cahill

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 20, 2017, as World Refugee Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of the United Nations World Refugee Day

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to increase awareness of issues that affect the lives of citizens of New York State and the world; and

WHEREAS, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established in December of 1950 to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that there are more refugees in the world today than at any time since World War II, and half of the world's refugees are children; and

WHEREAS, The UNHCR has determined that 1.19 million refugees are in need of immediate resettlement; and

WHEREAS, These refugees who need to be resettled include torture survivors, people with severe medical conditions, LGBTI individuals, children alone, and women and children at risk - all of whom who cannot

return home and cannot stay in their host country due to their extreme vulnerability; and

WHEREAS, These refugees are also fleeing armed conflict and human rights abuses in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Central America, and other regions; and

WHEREAS, According to the United Nations every minute 24 people leave everything behind to escape war, persecution or terror; and

WHEREAS, Amnesty International reports that more than half of the world's refugees are hosted by only 10 countries, and many of these countries do not have adequate resources to keep refugees fed, housed, or safe, leaving some refugees to survive on less than fifty cents a day; and

WHEREAS, According to the United Nations a refugee does not get to choose to be resettled in the United States or the country of his or her choice; and

WHEREAS, Even if a refugee is a candidate for resettlement in the United States, he or she must still be found admissible under U.S. immigration law; and

WHEREAS, Refugees are the most vetted individuals to enter the United States and must undergo an 18-24 month process, which, according to the U.S. Department of State, includes biometric security checks, Department of Homeland Security interviews, cultural orientation, and medical checks; and

WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Department of Temporary and

Disability Assistance, between October 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017, the United States admitted 39,098 refugees; and

WHEREAS, It is important to pay tribute to the dedication of humanitarian workers both domestically and abroad who devote their lives to ensuring that vulnerable people can find a home; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Refugee Resettlement at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has released that International Rescue Committee (IRC), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Church World Service (CWS), Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC), Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and World Relief Corporation (WR), some of the organizations responsible for resettling refugees in our community, along with numerous other community organizations and religious institutions have resettled more than 5,028 refugees in New York since October 2015 from more than 40 countries including Afghanistan, Burma, Iraq and Syria; and

WHEREAS, The Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration data consistently ranks New York among the top five in the Nation for accepting refugees; and

WHEREAS, There continue to be individuals and families in need of refuge and the support of New York State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the New York State Assembly declares its support for the resettlement of refugees in New York State and urges other states and local communities to join in supporting a national effort to resettle the most vulnerable refugees; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew Cuomo to proclaim June 20, 2017, as World Refugee Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of United Nations World Refugee Day; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, and Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.