

Leading Observers Praise Federal Judge's Injunction Blocking Refugee Executive Order and Blast Texas Gov. Abbott

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The [news](#) that U.S. District Judge Peter Messitte has issued a preliminary injunction blocking President Trump's executive order that allowed states and localities to reject refugee resettlement is a welcome development – a view shared by a host of leading refugee resettlement organizations and allies.

In a [joint statement](#), HIAS, International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), Church World Service (CWS), and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) — the plaintiffs in the case — praised Judge Messitte's ruling:

Mark J. Hetfield, President and CEO, HIAS: “This ruling shows the country how this administration was wrong to attempt a state-by-state refugee ban. Judge Messitte found it likely that the executive order is unlawful, and we are grateful for the clarity of this injunction. An overwhelming majority of governors and municipalities have already expressed their desire to continue welcoming refugees. To those few who have not, we say not only is it unkind and un-American to ban refugees from your states and towns, but it is unlawful. HIAS will

continue our work resettling refugees who have come to our shores looking to restart their lives in safety.”

Melissa Keaney, Senior Litigation Staff Attorney, IRAP: “We are thrilled that today’s ruling not only protects the important work the resettlement agencies have been doing with communities for decades, but also reflects our values as a nation. Communities all across the country have been voicing their support for refugees, and today’s ruling ensures that they can continue to welcome those in need of a safe home.”

Rev. John L. McCullough, President and CEO, CWS: “Today the sun is shining on refugee families and the communities who for decades have devoted their time and resources to welcome them. This ruling means that newly arriving refugees won’t have to choose between being together and accessing critical services as they rebuild their lives. It means that people of faith can continue to live out their calling to welcome the stranger. It means that we can continue to ensure that all refugees get a bright start in the United States, regardless of who is in office in the states and cities where they live.”

Krish O’Mara Vignarajah, President and CEO, LIRS: “Judge Messitte’s ruling is a win for the rule of law and for all refugees and the communities that welcome them. We know the fight isn’t over, but we’re confident that the Constitution—and, as the last few months have proved, the country—are on our side. LIRS and our colleagues have been collaborating with local, state, and national government to successfully resettle refugees for decades, and we plan to continue doing just that.”

Meanwhile, Texas Governor Greg Abbott continues to be roundly condemned for his decision to become the first state to opt-out of refugee resettlement. In addition to the Texas editorials and other key voices [we highlighted](#) earlier in the week condemning Abbott’s decision, a blistering *Washington Post* editorial from before Judge Messitte’s ruling, [“Greg Abbott turns his back on refugees — and American values,”](#) is worth reading (excerpted below):

With the stroke of a pen, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has embraced moral myopia — specifically, contempt for the planet’s most vulnerable people. He

did so by becoming the first governor to announce that his state would refuse to welcome even the scant number of legal, fully vetted refugees who would otherwise have settled there in the coming year.

Whatever gain Mr. Abbott, a Republican, may have hoped for, either in currying favor with President Trump, who has practically invited states and localities to shut their doors to refugees, or in pandering to the GOP's most xenophobic voters, is outweighed by the dishonor he has called down upon his state.

Texas would be a culturally, financially and politically diminished place if it somehow subtracted the decades of contributions by Mexican, German, Vietnamese and other immigrants, including refugees. By his action, Mr. Abbott has turned his back not just on a few hundred refugees, whose likely long-term success and assimilation in the United States are strongly supported by experience, but on a few hundred years of Texas's own history...