

**Assembly Meeting
December 12, 2015**

**Agenda Item 20
Syrian Refugee Resolution
REVISED**

HANDOUT

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, America has suffered through periods of xenophobia, panic and fear-mongering directed against various entire ethnic and religious groups, on alleged grounds that some members of that group might commit criminal or terrorist acts, for example the periods of “No Irish Need Apply,” the locking up in one place or deporting persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II (but not those of German ancestry who looked more like most Americans), the turning away of shiploads of Jewish refugees from Naziism.

WHEREAS, a reported 4 million men, women and children from Syria have become refugees from the terror and chaos in that country, most of whom are perceived as being of Arabic origin and Muslim faith, and it has been proposed that the United States of America give refuge in this country to 10,000 of such refugees;

WHEREAS, although the U.S. government will take its required and stringent precautions to screen out terrorists who may have included themselves among the refugees, we recognize that no government can ever guarantee that all potential terrorists or criminals can be weeded out from any large group, just as the police of any city cannot guarantee that no criminal gang members or home-grown terrorists are among the residents of their local communities;

WHEREAS, even if any of such refugees are lawfully admitted to this country, political leaders and would-be leaders of numerous States have, nonetheless, been urged to refuse to allow any of those refugees into their States, or to refuse to extend to those refugees state services extended to other refugees;

WHEREAS, the right of States to undermine national immigration policy is questionable:

WHEREAS, any such attempts by State and local political leaders have been and will continue to be perceived as discrimination against persons of Arabic backgrounds or the Muslim faith, which is antithetical to American ideals of humanitarianism, tolerance and freedom, which will be perceived by the world as America not practicing what it preaches, and which will have the effect of reducing America’s influence in the world;

WHEREAS, as it has been said, those who do not remember history are condemned to repeat it, and we refuse to again succumb to panic and fear-mongering; and

WHEREAS, we are mindful of the words engraved on the Statue of Liberty –

*“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

NOW, THEREFORE, the Bar Association of the State of Illinois, the Land of Lincoln, in the spirit of malice toward none and charity for all, does hereby reaffirm that in America we do not discriminate against entire groups on account of fears of the actions of a few, and, accordingly, we reject and repudiate any efforts by State or local political leaders, or would-be leaders, to deny rights to, or treat differently, refugees based solely on their ethnic, geographic or religious backgrounds.