

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Director Larry Bartlett
Senator Amy Klobuchar (#1)
Senate Judiciary Committee
October 1, 2015**

Question:

1. Questions for Mr. Bartlett, Ms. Strack, Mr. Emrich

How extensive would you say our security screenings for refugee admissions are in comparison to the security screenings provided to other groups of people entering the United States?

Are refugees among the most carefully vetted of all travelers to the United States?

Answer:

All refugees of all nationalities considered for admission to the United States undergo the most intensive level of security screening of any category of traveler to the United States involving multiple federal intelligence, security and law enforcement agencies, including the National Counterterrorism Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and the Departments of Homeland Security, State and Defense, in order to ensure that those admitted are not known to pose a threat to our country.

These safeguards include biometric (fingerprint) and biographic checks, and a lengthy in-person overseas interview by specially trained DHS officers who scrutinize the applicant's explanation of individual

circumstances to ensure the applicant is a bona fide refugee and is not known to present security concerns to the United States. The classified details of the refugee security screening process are regularly shared with relevant Congressional Committees.

All refugees, including Syrians, may only be admitted to the U.S. after DHS/USCIS receives the security checks undertaken by the intelligence and law enforcement communities and all issues are resolved. Only if DHS/USCIS affirmatively determines refugees are admissible are they allowed to travel to the United States.

The burden of proof in the refugee application process is on the refugee – the refugee must show he or she qualifies for refugee status. U.S. law and regulations require that each applicant provides DHS/USCIS with information that better enables our law enforcement and intelligence communities to confirm their identity and assess whether they present a security risk to the country. If DHS' highly trained Refugee Corps officers are not satisfied with the information provided, the applicant will not be permitted to travel to the United States. A lack of derogatory information on an applicant is not in and of itself sufficient evidence to pass the security clearance.

Mindful of the particular conditions of the Syria crisis, Syrian refugees go through yet additional forms of security screening. The screening process is multi-layered and recurrent, and involves a rigorous security review. We check extensively against law enforcement and intelligence community holdings—and those holdings are regularly updated and enhanced to ensure we have the most up-to-date and accurate information possible.

Our highest priority is the protection of the American people. We are committed to maintaining the integrity of the refugee vetting process even as we fulfill our moral responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance in the face of this historic refugee crisis.