



ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI

Office of the Archbishop

January 6, 2020

Bertha Henry
 Broward County Administrator
 115 South Andrews Avenue, Room 409
 Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 33301
bhenry@broward.org

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

JAN 8 '20 PM 3:23

Dear Mrs. Henry:

I write to you today, as the Archbishop of Miami, out of deep concern for refugee children and for the future of the long-time, refugee resettlement program in Florida, and to encourage you to consent to the continuation of resettlement of refugees to Miami-Dade/Broward. While Florida resettles refugee families, I want to especially focus today on the important role that Florida plays resettling unaccompanied refugee children. These are children who are orphans or who have been separated and lost contacts with their families. They are neither safe in their countries of birth nor in the refugee host countries to which they fled, and they often live in dire and dangerous situations in refugee camps or poor urban areas in those countries.

Catholic Charities of Miami has worked with the federal government, the state of Florida and the local community to welcome a small number of these children to Florida each year.

On September 26, 2019, President Trump announced his plan to authorize 18,000 refugees to come to the United States. On September 26, 2019, he issued Executive Order (EO) 13888, which provides guidelines for where the authorized refugees will be initially resettled. EO 13888 requires your formal consent for continued refugee resettlement in South Florida. Our motivation for making this request is the lifesaving nature of this program and its important purpose of protecting the most vulnerable refugees, particularly these unaccompanied refugee children, we urge that you provide written consent as soon as possible or by January 18, 2020.

Following Catholic social teaching and as Christians inspired by the loving words and life of Jesus Christ, we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and welcome refugees as part of our Christian call. We strive to treat refugees according to the golden rule by providing them protection that we would want for ourselves if we were fleeing persecution and life-threatening situations. Given the threats that refugees face, particularly unaccompanied refugee children, we also view our resettlement work as part of our commitment to protecting the right to life at all stages.

As you know, the refugee resettlement program has had a long history here in South Florida thanks to wide-spread support from the community.

The children resettled in Florida have embraced their new homes and new lives here and have thrived with support from the local community.

If you have any questions about the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I would request a meeting with you to discuss this matter further with myself, Catholic Charities staff, and one of the young people who has started a new life in South Florida. Thank you for considering my request.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read "T. Wenski". The signature is stylized with a large initial 'T' and a cursive 'Wenski'.

Most Reverend Thomas Wenski
Archbishop of Miami