



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on April 17, 2015

S.C. Rep. Urges State Dept. to Halt Refugee Resettlement Plans

U.S Rep. Trey Gowdy (shown) is demanding answers to his questions regarding a State Department plan to relocate refugees in the Spartanburg, South Carolina, area and why he only learned of the plan through news reports.



“As the Member of the U.S. House of Representatives representing the Spartanburg area, I am deeply concerned about the lack of notice, information, and consultation afforded to me and my constituents about this issue,” the Republican lawmaker said in a letter he wrote this week to Secretary of State John Kerry. Gowdy, who is chairman of the House Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, asked 17 questions in the letter, [the Daily Caller reported](#), including how, why and when his district was approved, what steps were taken to notify local government officials and whether they approved the plan.

Other questions Gowdy raised had to do with when the first of the refugees are due to arrive, how many there will be and what their entitlements might be. Questions relating to their country of origin and who is responsible for their housing, employment and education were also included.

“How many of the refugees to be resettled in the Spartanburg area are of the age to attend K-12 schools?” Gowdy asked. “Of those, how many need the local government to provide interpreters or teachers who speak the native language of the refugee for the students?” The congressman also inquired as to whether any of the newcomers have criminal records. “If so, for what crimes has each been convicted? Please explain the background check process performed on refugees scheduled to be resettled in Spartanburg.”

Gowdy requested a stop to implementation of the plan until he and his constituents are given sufficient answers to his questions and have a chance to review the information. “In that vein, I request at least one month’s notice prior to the arrival of the first refugee in the Spartanburg area,” he wrote.

[Fox News reported](#) in February that an estimated seven million people in war-ravaged Syria were seeking refugee status and 500 had already been admitted to the United States. That has raised concerns on Capitol Hill about a potential “federally sanctioned welcome party” for terrorists, since the Islamic State militants have based their unofficial headquarters in Syria. Rep. Mike McCaul (R-Texas), chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security, has called the resettlement plan “dangerous



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and reckless.” In a letter to Susan Rice, the president’s national security adviser, McCaul and fellow Republicans expressed concerns about the screening of the refugees, given the challenges to intelligence gathering in Syria.

“You have to have information to vet,” FBI Assistant Director Michael Steinbach, said in a February 11 hearing of the Homeland Security Committee. “Databases don’t [have] the information on those individuals, and that’s the concern.”

Humanitarian concerns behind the resettlement plan, may be laudable, but so are the security concerns expressed by the congressmen. The United States already has a continuing crisis of illegal immigration and the American people and our representative in Congress are at least entitled to know the backgrounds and the number of the refugees coming in, how much it will cost for their resettlement, how that cost will be borne, and most importantly, what impact the resettlement might have on security issues facing the nation.

Photo of Rep. Trey Gowdy: AP Images



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