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AB-3133 Refugees: resettlement. (2019-2020)

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Assembly Bill No. 3133

CHAPTER 189

An act to add Section 13286 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to refugees.

[Approved by Governor September 27, 2020. Filed with Secretary of State September 27, 2020.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 3133, Aguiar-Curry. Refugees: resettlement.

Federal Executive Order 13888 generally prohibits a refugee from being resettled in a state or locality if the state or locality has not consented, in writing, to the resettlement of refugees. The Executive Order requires the United States Secretary of State and the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services to implement a process to determine if a state or locality consents.

The bill would prohibit a refugee from being denied resettlement in California based on any criterion, method of administration, or practice that has the purpose or effect of discriminating on the basis of specified protected characteristics.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Under federal law, a refugee is a person who is forced to flee their country of origin due to persecution, or a well-founded fear of persecution, based upon their religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

(b) As of 2018, there were 70.8 million people forcibly displaced worldwide, including 25.9 million refugees.

(c) The United States Refugee Resettlement program has saved the lives of over 3 million refugees who were fleeing violence, conflict, or instability.

(d) Refugees who found safety in the United States include scientist Albert Einstein, Intel executive and engineer Andy Grove, and Google cofounder Sergey Brin.

(e) Recognizing the importance of refugee resettlement, in 1980 the United States formally codified the current refugee program and permitted the President of the United States, with the consultation of Congress, to set the annual refugee admissions number.

(f) Since 1980, California has received newly arrived refugees who have successfully made California their home.

(g) Annually, the state receives funding from the federal government to support newly arrived refugees through a program that is administered by the State Department of Social Services.

(h) As of 2018, newly arrived refugees are affiliated with and receive direct support services from resettlement agencies located throughout California.

(i) California has, and continues to, benefit from the significant economic and cultural contributions made by refugees, who hold \$17 billion in spending power in the state.

(j) Many of California's recently resettled refugees are holders of special immigrant visas, given to individuals who worked side by side with members of the United States Armed Forces during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

(k) California commits to annual participation in the United States Reception and Placement program for the long-term preservation of the program in the state and believes in the importance of the refugee resettlement program as humanitarian, national security, and foreign policy imperatives of the United States.

(l) Federal Executive Order 13888 was issued on September 26, 2019, and generally prohibits a refugee from being resettled in a state or locality if the state or locality has not consented to receiving refugees.

(m) On December 20, 2019, Governor Newsom sent a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo consenting to refugee resettlement in the State of California.

SEC. 2. Section 13286 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

13286. A refugee shall not be denied resettlement anywhere in California based on any criterion, method of administration, or practice that has the purpose or effect of discriminating on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic identified in Section 11135 of the Government Code.