

Rep. Blackburn: Executive order makes U.S. safer

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369

Marsha Blackburn 1:16 p.m. ET Jan. 29, 2017

President Trump's decision to temporarily suspend refugee admissions is a responsible approach, as I filed legislation last Congress calling for the same.

(Photo: Pool photo by Olivier Douliery)

President Trump issued an executive order on Friday to do exactly what he promised — protect the American people. The order, titled “Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States,” pauses the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for 120 days, with Syrian refugee admissions being suspended indefinitely, in order to closely examine the refugee application and adjudication process.



In December 2015, intelligence officials [advised Congress](#) that Islamic extremists were targeting our refugee program to infiltrate America. The president's common-sense approach simply imposes a security test for entering our country at a time of heightened terrorist activity.

There were 11,774 terrorist attacks worldwide resulting in over 28,000 deaths in 2015, [according to the State Department](#). There was also a 39% increase in Islamic State-related attacks in Syria. Then-CIA Director John Brennan chillingly [testified](#) before Congress last June that ISIL “is probably exploring a variety of means for infiltrating operatives into the West, including refugee flows.”

Despite overwhelming evidence that Islamic extremists are looking to infiltrate our refugee program, the Obama administration accelerated refugee admissions — a counterintuitive approach. The [U.S. admitted](#) 84,994 refugees with 12,587 coming from Syria in fiscal 2016. The announcement in September to [increase the refugee cap](#) in fiscal 2017 to 110,000 was reckless and delusional. Further, the Office of Refugee Resettlement has struggled with transparency by failing to timely produce annual reports to Congress as required by law.

[Trump's refugee ban is frightfully arbitrary: Our view](#)

President Trump's decision to temporarily suspend refugee admissions is a responsible approach, as I filed legislation last Congress calling for the same. Our intelligence and security agencies must ascertain the scope of the Islamic terror threat in order to develop proper refugee vetting protocols — if possible. The president's executive order is a security test, not a religious one. Democrats lived by “a pen and a phone” for the past eight years, and their misguided policies will meet their demise in a similar fashion.

Rep. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

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