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October 19, 2015

Dear Senator:

During this time of extraordinary humanitarian needs around the globe, we write to request that you support the bipartisan Middle East Refugee Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2016 (S. 2145) sponsored by Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) to address the crisis in Syria and its spillover.

With more people displaced around the globe than at any time since World War II, humanitarian needs are staggering today. The despair is evident in the risks so many refugees are taking to find a future.

S. 2145 would appropriate \$1 billion in additional money to the Department of State's bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration to provide assistance overseas and fund resettlement of the most vulnerable refugees here in the United States. We applaud the flexibility inherent in this legislation.

Working with our Caritas partners throughout Europe and the Middle East, as well as Muslim and Orthodox partners, Catholic Relief Services is leveraging public and private funds to provide food, shelter, education – above all, hope – to these suffering people. Despite the generosity of the United States in recent years to support refugees and displaced persons, needs continue to grow. In Jordan and Lebanon the number of refugees approaches 20-25% of the population; the strain on these nations' social systems threatens to further destabilize the region. Given the large number of emergency situations in other regions, unless Congress appropriates additional funding, we fear that the Administration will be forced to choose between desperate populations in different parts of the world.

Many vulnerable populations in the Middle East– children, religious and ethnic minorities, among others – struggle to obtain the protection they need. By helping to resettle more vulnerable refugees in the United States, we share the burden carried by Syria's very generous neighbors. Only about 1,700 Syrians have been resettled into the United States in recent years.

Of course, money and humanitarian assistance are necessary but not sufficient to protect the dignity of our brothers and sisters overseas. We urge you to collaborate urgently and tirelessly with the Administration and other governments to obtain ceasefires, initiate serious negotiations, provide impartial humanitarian assistance, and encourage efforts to build inclusive societies in

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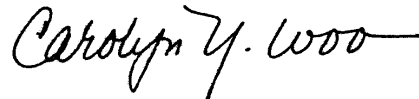
Syria and Iraq that protect the rights of all citizens, including Christians and other minorities. As violence escalates, the time is ripe for our nation to work with the international community on political solutions.

Senator, thank you for your consideration of this legislation. We recognize the many pressures on our national budget today. As Pope Francis exhorts us, "you are your brother's keeper."

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Oscar Cantú in black ink.

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú
Bishop of Las Cruces
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Handwritten signature of Carolyn Y. Woo in black ink.

Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo
President
Catholic Relief Services