

2014 RESOLUTION NO. 293

*Official Resolution of the Board of Commissioners
Macomb County, Michigan*

**Resolution Urging Macomb County Community Leaders To Engage and Support
Macomb County's Refugee and Immigrant Population And
Take Action On Key Issues That Impact the Refugee and Immigrant Community**

**Commissioner Toni Mocerri On Behalf of the Board of Commissioners,
Offers the Following Resolution:**

WHEREAS, based on Data Driven Detroit's 2013 New Macomb County Report, "the last 20 years has brought greater change to Macomb County's racial and ethnic makeup than experienced in the past, and the change is occurring in Macomb at a faster rate than in the neighboring counties" where in 1990, racial minorities made up only 3 percent of Macomb County residents, but in 2010, this inflated to 16 percent; and

WHEREAS, Macomb County's foreign-born population totals around 94,000 residents, 11 percent of the population, and is the third highest in Michigan in terms of percent of population (Michigan's foreign-born population is at 6.1 percent, far below the national average of 13 percent), and 6.6 percent of Macomb's foreign-born population (around 53,000 residents) have limited English proficiency; and

WHEREAS, in FY 2014, Macomb County's refugee arrivals was the highest in Michigan with more than 1,500 refugees, who were mostly from Iraq; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of this growing community, on December 15, 2014, the Macomb County Board of Commissioners Health and Human Services Committee conducted a public discussion to better understand the needs of the refugee and immigrant community, the services available to them, the organizations that provide these services, and identify some of the key issues that impact this community; and

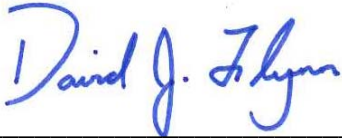
WHEREAS, the public discussion was attended by leaders of various organizations that service Macomb's refugee and immigrant community, which included Welcoming Michigan, Welcome Mat Detroit, State of Michigan Department of Human Service Office of Refugee Resettlement, Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, ACCESS, Chaldean Community Foundation, and Chaldean American Ladies of Charity; and

WHEREAS, more than 90 minutes of public discussion not only laid the foundation for more-detailed future public discussions, but also prompted the Board of Commissioners to recognize the key issues of the refugee and immigrant community and adopt a call-to-action through this resolution.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Macomb County Board of Commissioners strongly urges Macomb County's community leaders to engage and support the refugee and immigrant community and take action on the following:

1. Expand public transportation for Macomb County and ensure that the refugee and immigrant community is an integral part of the regional transportation planning process. Lack of public transportation hinders access to services, English as Second Language (ESL) classes, jobs, schools, etc.
2. Find more innovative programs at the federal, state, county, and local levels to expand affordable housing for the refugee and immigrant community. Lack of credit history and capital limits the ability to obtain affordable housing.
3. Urge the State of Michigan to ensure all eligible refugees are enrolled in full scope Medicaid and eliminate any barriers, technological or otherwise.
4. Educate the refugee and immigrant community on how to navigate the healthcare system and properly take advantage of the health benefits. With language barriers, complicated rules and exceptions for non-citizens, navigating health care becomes exponentially more difficult.
5. Urge Macomb County's workforce development organizations to recognize the unique limitations (i.e. language barrier, lack of transportation, etc.) and special skill sets (obtained in their home counties) of the refugee and immigrant community and recalibrate job replacement programs to accommodate.
6. Urge ethnic community leaders to reach out to other ethnic communities to integrate programs and share resources and best practices.
7. Urge all elected officials to be cognizant of ethnic community enclaves that are trusted by the refugee and immigrant community, and expand outreach in order to better understand their needs and help them integrate into the broader Macomb community.
8. Urge all elected officials to continually find ways to educate its constituents about refugees and immigrants to avoid misunderstandings and eliminate discrimination.
9. Perform gap analysis on the current resources/services to identify redundant resources/services and missing resources/services for the refugee and immigrant community.
10. Urge Macomb County courts, and law enforcement professionals (police, prosecutor, sheriff) to recognize the special needs of the refugee and immigrant communities where basic legal hurdles become exponentially more difficult to handle and navigate, especially in areas of reporting crimes, cultural sensitivity regarding domestic violence (including making it easier to petition for personal protection orders), and awareness of victim-based forms of immigration relief, such as visas for trafficking and crime victims.
11. Urge the leaders of Macomb County's legal community, especially those who speak multiple languages, to offer pro-bono and/or low-cost legal services for the refugee and immigrant community.

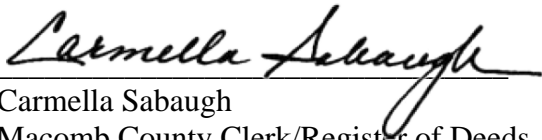
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that hard copies of this resolution, digital copies if possible, be provided to the Macomb County Federal Legislative Delegation, Macomb County State Legislative Delegation, Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel, Macomb County Assistant Executive Pam Lavers, Macomb County Health and Community Services Director Steve Gold, Macomb County Health Director Bill Ridella, Macomb County Community Services Agency Director Rhonda Powell, Macomb/St.Clair Michigan Works Executive Director John Bierbusse, Macomb County RTA Representatives Roy Rose and Don Morandini, SMART Executive Director John Hertel, Macomb Community College President Jim Jacobs, all Macomb County Circuit Court Judges, Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith, Macomb County Sheriff Anthony Wickersham, Macomb County Bar Association President Julie Gatti, Michigan Association of Counties Deputy Director Steve Currie, GCSI Director Kirk Profit, GCSI Associate Gary Owens, Welcoming Michigan, Welcome Mat Detroit, State of Michigan Department of Human Service Office of Refugee Resettlement, Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, ACCESS, Chaldean Community Foundation, and Chaldean American Ladies of Charity.



Dave Flynn
Macomb County Board Chair



Toni Mocerri
Macomb County Commissioner, District 1



Carmella Sabaugh
Macomb County Clerk/Register of Deeds

Passed at 12-18-14 Full Board Meeting