

South Bend Tribune

Base public policy on facts, not fear

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As a resident of Indiana, I do not see overwhelmingly credible evidence that Syrian refugees threaten our security. While I appreciate Gov. Mike Pence's desire to protect Hoosiers, the federal government already has an effective review protocol in place that vets refugees and ensures the safety of American citizens. According to a Cato Institute study, this process lasts on average 18 to 24 months and has successfully resettled 859,629 refugees into the United States since 2001. The number of these refugees with ties to an incident of domestic terrorism? Zero.

The recent terrorist attacks in Paris, while horrifying, do not alter the devastating humanitarian situation in Syria that has forced millions of Syrians into migration. Yes, we must be vigilant in the face of terror, but by halting our welcome of these innocent human beings, we are not only playing into the fear ISIS desires to spread, we are also fundamentally betraying the ideals that have made our nation great throughout its history: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free ..."

Let's make public policies based on facts and not fear. Let's act on the values of compassion and hospitality that make our nation great.