

Protect American Citizens —End U.S. Refugee Policy

BY BRENDA WALKER

The author issued the following Statement in response to Refugee Admissions, Berkeley, California, April 24, 2012.

Here in California, we have had double-digit unemployment since 2008. The March jobless rate was 11.0 percent. The state budget has been in a simmering crisis for many years, with billions of dollars in routine shortfall where high welfare (and pension) costs overwhelm the faltering financial input of taxpayers. Nearly a third of welfare recipients in the U.S. reside in generous California.

It is therefore an extra stab in the back for the federal government to dump needy refugees in California when Sacramento cannot handle the requirements of its citizen residents.

In general, Washington's continued dumping of unskilled, non-English-speaking refugees into the country during the worst joblessness since the Great Depression is appalling.

The United States is not the flophouse for the world's destitute; it is the beloved home of the American people. We are sick and tired of it being abused for the political aims of the State Department and to provide employment for professional resettlers.

I was particularly disturbed to learn in January of the resettlement of Burmese refugees in Oakland whose children suffer from lead poisoning. Oakland has been devastated by the recession and has had to lay off dozens of police officers because of budgetary cutbacks. Alameda County had an unemployment rate of 9.7 percent as of March 2012.

Both the city and state can ill afford the long-term

healthcare costs of hundreds of lead-poisoned Burmese refugees with life-long symptoms of intelligence reduction. "Just 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood can permanently lower a child's IQ by four to five points," according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 15, 2006.

An article in the journal *Public Health Reports* in 2005 observed, "Lead poisoning in children imposes both immediate and long-term financial burdens on taxpayers."

A local liberal tabloid, the *East Bay Express*, listed the problems facing the group:

Poverty Stricken: A new report shows that Oakland's refugees from Burma are stuck in extreme poverty, with up to 80 percent unemployment, *East Bay Express*, January 6, 2012

Among Oakland's Burmese refugee population:

- 63 percent are unemployed. Those who are employed have sporadic, low-wage jobs.
- Among Karenni, 81 percent are unemployed, 90 percent live in extreme poverty, and 90 percent have no high school education.
- 57 percent live below the threshold for extreme poverty, making less than \$1,000 for a family of five. Most of the remainder lives below the poverty line.
- 38 percent speak no English and 28 percent speak English poorly.
- 74 percent say lack of English is their biggest barrier to accessing healthcare.

The continued dumping of cultures that may never assimilate (e.g. Somalis, who are polygamous, misogynist and prone to gang crime) is a fool's errand. The entire refugee project as it now stands should be scrapped. Americans' government should act in a way that will not harm the citizens. ■

Brenda Walker is publisher of the websites LimitsToGrowth.org and ImmigrationsHumanCost.org. A resident of the San Francisco Bay area, she is a frequent contributor to The Social Contract.