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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, November 20, 2015

NOVEMBER 30TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Congressman Jason Smith Capitol Report: Keeping America and Missouri Safe Friday, November 20, 2015

The terror attacks last week in Paris served as a wake-up call to all of us.

Of extreme alarm is that one of the terrorists was found to be carrying a Syrian refugee passport. This discovery clearly points to the fact that we need to get a better grasp on the origin, background, intentions, and makeup of the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the Middle East, specifically places like Syria.

The Obama administration has announced it will increase the number of worldwide refugees accepted into the U.S. each year from 70,000 to 100,000 by 2017. I have serious concerns with the administration's ability to ensure Americans' safety by properly vetting the current refugees entering the U.S., let alone a dramatic increase. What has become evident is that these terrorists are set on exploiting the serious humanitarian crisis of women, families, children, and students fleeing the war-torn regions these same terrorists created.

Officials from the National Counterterrorism Center and the FBI have expressed the same concerns to Congress. Terrorists and foreign fighters are looking to take advantage of the

situation in order to get into the United States and cause harm. FBI Director James Comey told Congress back in October that the federal government lacked the ability to conduct the thorough background checks needed to vet the Syrian refugees the president wants to let in.

It is the number one job of the federal government to provide for the defense and security of the American people. That is why this week the House of Representatives passed legislation I helped sponsor to put a stop to the president's proposal to bring more refugees into this country. The American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act passed the U.S. House with an overwhelming show of bipartisan support – more than 45 Democrats joined with Republicans to provide a veto-proof majority – ordering the FBI and Department of Homeland Security to put the brakes on bringing in any more refugees to the U.S. The administration needs to certify to Congress that these individuals are not a threat to national security. The bill wasn't about pushing Republican ideas, it wasn't about pushing Democrat ideas, it was about Congress coming together to keep Americans safe, and the best way to do that is to provide no doubt that there are no terrorists entering this country.

Additionally, I sent a letter to Governor Nixon this week urging him to end any immediate plans to bring Syrian refugees to Missouri. We need to do what is necessary to keep Missouri families safe. In the letter I noted that “the president's plan to increase the number of Syrian refugees admitted to the United States poses a genuine threat to the American people.” This week, I also sent a letter to President Obama urging him to immediately halt admissions of refugees from Syria and Iraq onto American soil, and demanded that his administration notify Congress before any refugee policy changes.

This is not about being uncompassionate towards the refugees of Syria, but about keeping Americans safe and keeping the residents of Missouri safe. We cannot let terrorists exploit our country's long-standing tradition of compassion by posing as refugees from Syria or any other country.

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