

THOMAS P. TIFFANY  
7TH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
451 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-3365

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
2620 STEWART AVE, SUITE 312  
WAUSAU, WI 54401  
(715) 298-9344



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 27, 2023

The Honorable Emily Berge  
Council President  
City of Eau Claire  
203 S. Farwell St.  
P.O. Box 5148  
Eau Claire, WI 54702

Dear President Berge,

As you know, plans by a controversial non-governmental organization (NGO) to resettle a large number of refugees – potentially from Somalia, Syria, and other unstable countries – in the Eau Claire area have raised understandable concerns among local residents.<sup>1</sup> Even more frustrating, representatives of this NGO reportedly met with the city manager well in advance of this announcement – but the city manager did not share this information with local officials or the public. If true, this is deeply disconcerting.

As you also know, Somalia is an incredibly dangerous country. According to the U.S. Department of State, “[v]iolent crime, such as kidnapping and murder, [are] common” and “[t]errorists continue to plot kidnappings, bombings and other attacks.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, child marriage and polygamy in Somalia are widespread,<sup>3</sup> with reports suggesting that one-third of Somali girls reportedly married off before they reach 18 years of age – and nearly one in five married before they turn 15.<sup>4</sup>

Syria, another country that has been mentioned as a potential source of refugees, is also a hotbed of instability and terrorism. According to a 2023 State Department report, “[n]o part of Syria is safe from violence,” and ISIS and al-Qaeda affiliates remain active there.<sup>5</sup>

I raise these concerns because the Biden administration’s lax approach to screening incoming foreigners is well known. The resettlement of tens of thousands of Afghans in 2021, for example,

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.wqow.com/eye\\_on\\_eau\\_claire/residents-react-to-refugee-resettlement-coming-to-chippewa-valley/article\\_156fdf84-6ef9-11ee-9ad1-6f1aaedf0fa0.html](https://www.wqow.com/eye_on_eau_claire/residents-react-to-refugee-resettlement-coming-to-chippewa-valley/article_156fdf84-6ef9-11ee-9ad1-6f1aaedf0fa0.html)

<sup>2</sup> <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/somalia-travel-advisory.html#>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/profiles/somali/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/sep/03/a-race-against-time-the-new-law-putting-somalias-children-at-risk-of-marriage>

<sup>5</sup> <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/syria-travel-advisory.html>

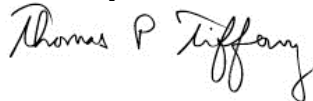
resulted in the admission of several individuals with past criminal convictions<sup>6</sup> – including people who had been previously deported,<sup>7</sup> and the resettlement of others who went on to commit appalling crimes ranging from assault<sup>8</sup> to sexual abuse of minors.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to potential safety considerations, residents have voiced concerns about the costs of absorbing these refugees into the local school system, their impact on housing costs and availability, and the additional strain they will place on social safety net programs – particularly at a time when many current residents are grappling with rising costs and struggling to make ends meet. People have also raised legitimate questions about the ability of these new arrivals to adapt to basic American social and cultural norms.

Given the dangerous conditions in these countries, and the Biden administration’s alarming track record when it comes to vetting newcomers, it is inconceivable that the local community would be kept in the dark in this way. I hope you will investigate these troubling allegations and take appropriate action.

I would also ask that you provide residents of Eau Claire and the broader Chippewa Valley with a robust opportunity to submit public comment on any resettlement plans, and that you collaborate with state and county officials to conduct a full assessment of the costs of any such resettlement to Wisconsin taxpayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas P. Tiffany".

Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/aug/30/convicted-rapist-reached-us-afghan-evacuation-flig/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/sep/16/second-major-felon-found-on-afghan-evacuation-flig/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/sep/24/alleged-assault-female-fort-bliss-service-member-a/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/sep/23/afghan-evacuees-us-military-base-charged-domestic-/>