
Texas Threatens to Sue Agencies That Help Syrian Refugees

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“Failure by your organization to cooperate with the State of Texas as required by federal law may result in the termination of your contract with the state and other legal action,” said Texas Health and Human Services Commissioner Chris Traylor in a letter to International Rescue Committee, or IRC.

Traylor, in charge of refugee programs in Texas, said in the letter the state “has been unable to achieve cooperation” with the IRC in “relocating some Syrian refugees in the near future.”

Hours after the attacks in Paris that left 130 dead, 30 governors led by Abbott announced their states will not accept more refugees from Syria considering that any of them could be a threat.

Although Texas and other states argue they can veto the Syrian refugee relocation, the Obama administration said it would violate federal laws.

IRC, which is headquartered in New York, responded to the letter with a statement recalling that Texas “has long been a safe haven for the world’s most vulnerable refugees.”

“The International Rescue Committee hopes that Texas will continue to honor this long-standing tradition and its commitment to the U.S. Constitution,” he added.

IRC Director in Texas, Donna Duvin, said before receiving the letter last week the agency was already working with federal authorities to relocate Syrian refugees in the southern state.

“If that needs to be done without state support, then we would be looking for resources outside of state support to make that possible,” Duvin had said then.

Although other agencies have also announced their intention to continue relocating Syrian refugees in Texas, the state department of Health, at the moment, has only approached IRC, Traylor told The Dallas Morning News.

Post the Paris attacks, the U.S. Congress, also approved, with the support of Republicans and some Democrats, a bill, which in practice blocks Obama’s plan to accommodate 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next year.
