House Committee on Local Government
Ms. Mary Lou Terrien, Committee Clerk

Dear Ms. Terrien,

We are writing today to urge you to reject the House Concurrent Resolution 0028. This resolution recommends a halt to all refugee resettlement until alleged failures to comply with Refugee Act of 1980 are somehow resolved.

The Office of Social Justice is the advocacy agency of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Located in Grand Rapids, we work to develop a deeper understanding and response to God's call for justice. For almost a decade, we have been educating church members about the myths and facts surrounding immigrants and refugees -- and providing tools to empower the church to call on those in power to improve systems and enact just public policy.

Our members, who have been co-sponsoring refugees for years, agree: Michigan is better because of the contributions that refugees are making here. They are opening businesses, joining our churches, and participating in our communities. The stories they bring of courage and fortitude inspire us. Their doggedness to survive and thrive give us hope.The CRNCA has a long history of welcoming refugees regardless of religion or country of origin. Many of our churches, hundreds of whom are located in the state of Michigan, have testified to how their lives and congregations have changed for the better because they welcomed refugees.

It is a myth that refugees are not adequately screened before coming here. In fact, refugees are the best-screened group of immigrants that the U.S. admits. The process is long and robust, and has a long track record of keeping Americans safe. No court or other competent authority has ever found that the Office of Refugee Resettlement or any other actors in the resettlement process in Michigan are in violation of the security or local consultation provisions of the Refugee Act of 1980.

When communities come together to welcome refugees, we see a foretaste of the kingdom of God. Any attempt to stall our refugee resettlement participation in Michigan is a threat to the lives and dignity of refugees, and we stand firmly against it. **We urge you to shut down House Concurrent Resolution 28.** It creates unfounded and unnecessary fear among a group of people who are already vulnerable, and would be a moral failure for Michigan.

Sincerely,
Peter Vander Meulen
Office Coordinator, Office of Social Justice
CRCNA