



CITY OF FORT WAYNE

THOMAS C. HENRY, MAYOR

February 22, 2010

The Honorable Richard G. Lugar
United States Senate
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lugar,

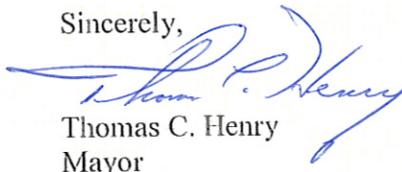
On behalf of the City of Fort Wayne, I request your support for an appropriation of \$327,500 from the fiscal year 2011 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act for health care, education, and outreach for the Burmese refugees in Fort Wayne, IN.

As you know, since 2007, over 6,000 Burmese refugees have been resettled in Fort Wayne, IN from refugee camps in Malaysia and Thailand, creating one of the largest Burmese communities in the country. The community has struggled to assimilate and provide services for this population, which arrived with unique challenges. Among other issues is the health of the refugees and their understanding of the American medical system. Local stakeholders agree that the Burmese are a more medically complicated population than previous waves of refugees. Refugees carry with them a greater incidence of infectious disease, such as latent tuberculosis infection and hepatitis B and hepatitis C, as well as other maladies like lead poisoning, and parasites.

It has been a challenge to ensure that the incoming refugees receive early and appropriate medical care, due to obstacles related to transportation, language, access, insurance, and the Burmese unfamiliarity with the American medical system. Fortunately, a nonprofit clinic located in south-central Fort Wayne and close to most of the Burmese resettlements, has agreed to host a weekly clinic that will see refugees with primary and OB healthcare needs. This clinic would feature care coordinators, liaisons, interpreters, and educators who will teach the refugees how to become self-sufficient in seeking and following up on health care, rather than rely on special accommodations currently in place. This project will ensure that the refugees receive proper care early in the resettlement process, preventing any infectious diseases from becoming public health threats, and teaching Burmese refugees how to care for themselves and access medical care on their own.

Senator, this project will have an immediate and profound impact on our community and its newest arrivals. I respectfully seek your support for this important project. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Thomas C. Henry
Mayor

ENGAGE • INNOVATE • PERFORM

BDD801 6043584v1

One Main St. • Fort Wayne, Indiana • 46802-1804 • www.cityoffortwayne.org

An Equal Opportunity Employer