

Draft 2

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Dear Governor _____:

Recently, I was very happy to sign into law legislation to assist the resettlement of Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees who fled their homelands and are seeking a new life in the United States. I am deeply grateful to the Congress for its speed in passing this legislation and the American people for opening their arms to welcome these refugees to our shores.

Resettlement of these newcomers has begun, but to be successful will require the widest possible support. The primary responsibility for the resettlement lies with the accredited voluntary agencies which since World War II have successfully resettled almost 1.5 million people. They know what is necessary to bring a refugee into a community and support him as he is integrated into American life and society. In resettling the Indochinese refugees, I am assured the voluntary agencies will avoid resettlement in economically hard-hit areas and will not concentrate the refugees in specific localities. I hope that you will direct your State agencies to provide the fullest measure of support for the work of these voluntary agencies.

We have received many offers of help for the refugees from State and community leaders. Coordination of the local efforts and offers of assistance may become a problem in the coming months. I urge you to give consideration to the

creation of a state-wide committee which will bring together all of the heads of the local resettlement organizations, the involved state officials, and interested citizens groups to consider refugee issues. The Committee would permit you to set state goals and standards and monitor progress. With your backing, it might also be used to mobilize support in local communities, identify sponsorship, develop job opportunities, and explore solutions to problems ranging all the way from the certification of professionals to obtaining driver's licenses.

The Director of the Inter-Agency Task Force will be in touch with you in the next few days with more specific information on state reimbursement procedures and suggested opportunities for State involvement.

We have made a good beginning in the resettlement of these newest refugees to our country. I hope that during the coming months I can count on your support in the integration of these refugees into American life. What you will be doing will be in the finest tradition of our country.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Ford