

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

June 6, 2023

**Proclaiming June 2023 as “Refugee and Immigrant Heritage Awareness Month”**

Home to nearly 10 million residents<sup>1</sup>, 140 cultures, and 45% of Angelenos that speak a language other than English<sup>2</sup>, this makes Los Angeles County (County) one of the most populated and culturally diverse counties in the United States. Historically, the United States is recognized around the world as a nation that welcomes refugees who pursue safety, liberty, opportunity, and basic human rights. It offers refugees and migrants a chance for a new start and a better future for their families, free of religious and political persecution, civil turmoil, geopolitical tensions, or war. California and the County follow suit among other national leaders in the welcoming and resettlement of refugees and immigrant arrivals according to data from the Department of State. According to the Refugee Processing Center, 7,398 refugees<sup>3</sup> from nearly 30 different countries arrived in California over the last 5.5 years many of which made Los Angeles County their new home. The County is also home to 3.6 million immigrants<sup>4</sup> whose cultural, economic, and social contributions are profound and invaluable.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic recovery and lifting of the Public Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID-19, the nation continues to embrace a commitment of

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau, “Los Angeles County, California” <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/losangelescountycalifornia>

<sup>2</sup> California Immigrant Data Portal, “Language Spoken: California’s linguistic diversity is an asset, creating opportunities for communities to connect and illustrating the state’s ties to the world.” <https://immigrantdataca.org/indicators/languages-spoken>.

<sup>3</sup> Refugee Processing Center, “Refugee Arrivals by State and Nationality” <https://www.wrapsnet.org/archives/>

<sup>4</sup> USC Equity Research Institute, “State of Immigrant In L.A. County 2022” [https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/1411/docs/SOILA\\_2022\\_Full\\_v21.pdf](https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/1411/docs/SOILA_2022_Full_v21.pdf)

**MOTION**

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compassion, generosity, and support for refugees, immigrants, and their families who fled their homelands. This compassion and support are reflected in the County's actions, including the 2022 Board motion – [Ensuring an Equitable Post-Pandemic Recovery for Los Angeles Immigrants](#) – to identify opportunities to support immigrant communities most impacted by the pandemic to improve and overcome any disproportionate health, social, and economic impacts and barriers. The County also cemented its commitment to serving linguistically isolated refugee and immigrant communities and expanding in-language capacity through its 2022 Board motion, [Strengthening Language Access in County Services](#). More recently, the County's 2022 Board motion – [Improving Immigrant Access to Public Benefits](#) – led to countywide communication and outreach coordination efforts to engage and encourage historically marginalized County immigrant residents and their families to access safety net programs and overcome the chilling effect of the Public Charge rule.

To celebrate, honor, and uplift the diversity and numerous contributions refugees and immigrant communities have made to the County, the Board of Supervisors has proclaimed June in years past as "Refugee and Immigrant Heritage Awareness Month." The County's recognition coincides with the State of California's annual "Refugee Awareness Month" observance and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees declaration of "World Refugee Day" on June 20. The annual observance serves as an opportunity to highlight the collaboration between County, advocates, and service providers, including the Refugee Forum of Los Angeles and its committee members:

- The Coalition for Human Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
- American Red Cross
- Pars Equality Center
- International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA)
- Church World Services (CWS)
- JVS SoCal
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services

Together, these agencies, along with the departments of Arts and Culture, Consumer and Business Affairs and its Office of Immigrant Affairs, and Public Social Services,

organize the *Refugee Day: Building a Brighter Future*. This community event welcomes, celebrates, and honors refugees and immigrant families and individuals in the County. Activities at this event provide culturally and linguistically sensitive resettlement assistance, public benefits enrollment, and resource linkage to employment opportunities, family reunification, and many other services.

**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim June 2023, as “Refugee and Immigrant Heritage Awareness Month” to honor the invaluable contributions of refugees and immigrants to the County;
2. Recognize the Refugee Forum of Los Angeles, its committee members – the Coalition for Human Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA), American Red Cross, Pars Equality Center, International Institute of Los Angeles, Church World Services – and the County Department of Public Social Services, the County Department of Arts and Culture, the Office of Immigrant Affairs in the County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, and renowned Creative Strategist Artist Phung Huynh for their commitment to serving the refugees and immigrants who have made the County their home;
3. Request the Music Center to waive fees in the amount of up to \$2,500, excluding the cost of liability insurance, for use of the Gloria Molina Grand Park, Block 2, Lawn and Olive Court Areas on Tuesday, June 20, 2023; and
4. Waive parking fees in the amount of up to \$6,000, excluding the cost of liability insurance, for approximately 300 vehicles to park on June 20, 2023 at the Music Center, Lot 14 Garage.

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