



December 19, 2023

To: Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors

Re: Resolution related to refugee settlement

The Board of Directors of the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce voted unanimously this morning to oppose the resolution being considered by the County Board tonight related to refugee resettlement. The following are excerpts from the Chamber's 2024 Business Issues Agenda:

Inviting new residents to our nation and community presents a valuable opportunity for employers to offer economic prospects to individuals and families eager to forge a fresh start. It also contributes to enriching the overall quality of life for everyone in the Chippewa Valley.

The Chamber is committed to ensuring that Eau Claire remains a welcoming community to those who are fleeing peril and persecution in their home countries. Our community has a history of benefiting economically and culturally from the refugees who form our Hmong community. It is important to create a nurturing environment where newcomers can flourish, becoming productive residents, and proud citizens in west central Wisconsin.

Respectful, fact-based debate should characterize decision making in public policy, keeping the broader public interest in mind and avoiding the hyperbole, misleading information, personal attacks, and appeals to fear and emotion.

The Chamber believes the proposed resolution is unnecessary and counter-productive to our community's reputation as being welcoming to new residents. World Relief and others involved have been completely forthcoming with information about the resettlement process. We disagree with the "Whereas" statement in the proposed resolution that relocation of refugees "could impact the quality of life for Eau Claire County residents due to the possibility of excessive demand on local resources..." To the contrary, experiences in other communities has shown that welcoming refugees provides positive economic benefits.

We strongly encourage Supervisors to vote "no" on this proposed resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David W. Minor".

David W. Minor  
President & CEO  
minor@eauclairechamber.org  
715-858-0612

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Rogers".

Scott Rogers  
Vice President Governmental Affairs  
rogers@eauclairechamber.org