



December 3, 2015

The Honorable Brian Sandoval
Office of the Governor
State Capitol Building
101 N. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Governor Sandoval,

When I heard of your recent request to halt Syrian refugee acceptance in Nevada, I was disappointed. I believe our great state is above politicizing the struggle of the world's most vulnerable population, and as our leader, I urge you to reconsider your opinion.

I, too, want Nevada to be a safe place for tourists and residents alike. I came to this country fleeing political persecution in Nicaragua. It was not an easy decision to leave my home, but I was willing sacrifice anything and risk everything to make sure my children were protected.

Refugees flee their homeland, knowing they will probably never see their country again. Hundreds of thousands of people have left war-torn Syria and many more will follow. For me, the political asylum process was long and thorough, but once I was accepted, I was incredibly relieved. I was welcomed and had help navigating a new country at a very hard time in my life – that support meant so much to my family and me. That's the America I'm proud to be a citizen of. I believe that's the country and state we should continue to be.

The Culinary Union is a diverse organization. We represent members from 167 countries and with 55,000 members, we are Nevada's largest immigrant organization. Each person could tell you their family's migration story - whether it was a forced journey across the ocean centuries ago, a move from Europe to a new land in the hope of a better life, an unimaginably difficult border crossing, or even like me, searching for refuge from very real threats. These experiences enrich our community. They are the stories of hardworking people that keep Las Vegas running.

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Rather than turn our backs on Syrian refugees, perhaps you should consider extending a hand and showing compassion. Politicizing the lives of truly vulnerable people is not leadership. Nevada deserves better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Geoconda Argüello-Kline".

Geoconda Argüello-Kline

Secretary-Treasurer