FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - February 13th 2024

Media Contact: Duane Shoebridge: projectlead@securewisconsinprojec.com

**Local Citizens Persist in Billboard Campaign**

The Refugee Resettlement Act is a federal program that the states can voluntarily participate in to help refugees from foreign countries. Currently, Wyoming is the only state not participating, but states can enter or leave the program at will. World Relief, one of ten non-government organizations in Wisconsin that work with the federal government on refugee resettlement in Wisconsin was invited to Eau Claire by the unelected Eau Claire City Manager’s Office. The federal legislation requires World Relief to consult with local governments before bringing refugees into a community. There was a complete lack of transparency and consultation with *elected* officials and no opportunity for timely public input. To add insult to injury, World Relief repeatedly told County Boards that the local governments had no say in the process.

Local citizens are standing up to the Goliath organization. They are working with county boards and State Representatives to work on legislation. They are also continuing the billboard campaign to educate the community of the concerns and dangers of not following the law. The Liberty Alliance of Wisconsin has joined with area citizens to facilitate the placement of the newest billboard on Hwy 8 east of Poskin in Barron County.

At the State level legislation has been drafted, sent to committee, and given public hearings. AB1004 and SB916 could be voted on in the current floor session of the State Legislature. The legislation does not ask for anything more than to require NGOs to contact every government body (school boards, town boards, city councils, and county boards) within the 100-mile resettlement range and notify them of the possibility that refugees could be resettled within their jurisdictional boundaries in the near future.

The notice’s intent is to give local stakeholders time to evaluate the potential impact on public services such as health, education, and law enforcement. Eau Claire County and the surrounding counties are facing current significant challenges to education and health care. New strains on those at this time could have deep and lasting negative impacts.

Fox News’ recent article on the topic contains misinformation from World Relief stating that “The Refuge Act requires U.S. agencies to consult and coordinate with state and local authorities and to *financially support resettlement*…refugee resettlement is a federal, not local responsibility.” The reality is that tthe NGOs retain the lion’s share of federal refugee resettlement dollars and when those are gone it is in fact the local government that is left to carry the social program, education, and medical costs.

[Battleground state locked in clash over Somali refugee resettlement | Fox News](https://www.foxnews.com/politics/battleground-wisconsin-locked-clash-over-somali-refugee-resettlement)

The billboard’s purpose is to raise public awareness and give busy, working Wisconsin families with a vested interest in their communities an opportunity to become informed, involved and heard.