COMMITTEE REPORT

April 28, 2015

**H. 3980**

Introduced by Reps. Hicks, Chumley, Burns, Allison, Forrester, Brannon, Cole and Tallon

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Read the first time April 16, 2015.

**THE COMMITTEE ON**

**INVITATIONS AND MEMORIAL RESOLUTIONS**

To whom was referred a House Resolution (H. 3980) memorializing the South Carolina Department of Social Services to provide information regarding the resettlement of refugees in Spartanburg, South Carolina to ensure, etc., respectfully

**REPORT:**

That they have duly and carefully considered the same and recommend that the same do pass:

JIMMY C. BALES for Committee.

**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

MEMORIALIZING THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IN SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF THE EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC FUNDS AND OTHER COSTS OF PROVIDING GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

Whereas, it has been reported that World Relief, an international relief organization, has opened an office in Spartanburg, South Carolina; and

Whereas, according to the organization’s website, World Relief coordinates with the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement to offer resettlement, placement, and various services to refugees settling in communities, in partnership with local faith communities; and

Whereas, according to a local news article, HHS is required to fund these services, but the services are administered by the state’s Department of Social Services (DSS); and

Whereas, according to news reports, World Relief’s Spartanburg office anticipates that dozens of refugees will move to the area during 2015, some of whom already may have arrived; and

Whereas, it is unknown from which countries these refugees resettling in Spartanburg come; and

Whereas, services provided to these refugees will have a financial impact on the Spartanburg and surrounding communities, including added costs and expenses for operation of public schools, health services, law enforcement, local transportation, and other taxpayer‑funded services; and

Whereas, Spartanburg’s and South Carolina’s financial resources are limited. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina memorialize the South Carolina Department of Social Services to provide the following information:

How many refugees are expected to be resettled through World Relief in Spartanburg and in the State as a whole?

How many of these refugees will live in Spartanburg?

Are resettled refugees generally, and those resettled in Spartanburg through World Relief or other sponsors specifically, required to remain in the local community or the state into which they are initially resettled?

If refugees are not required to remain in the community or state into which they are initially resettled, are those refugees resettling in Spartanburg through World Relief being encouraged to remain in the local community or the State and, if so, how are they being encouraged to remain?

Does World Relief or HHS’s Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) contract with DSS to provide services to the refugees resettled in Spartanburg through World Relief? If so, in what amounts, for what purposes, and for how long are these contracts?

Has HHS already provided funds to DSS to provide services to these refugees? If so, what amount of funding has been provided to DSS and how has DSS used, or how does DSS plan to use, the funding?

Does World Relief, ORR, or DSS contract with other public or private agencies or faith communities in the State to provide services to the refugees resettled in Spartanburg through World Relief, and, if so, in what amounts, for what purposes, and for how long are these contracts?

Is there a limit or quota on the number of refugees admitted into the United States for resettlement, and are the refugees that are resettling in Spartanburg through World Relief accounted for in that limit or quota?

Which services are refugees who resettle in Spartanburg, and elsewhere in South Carolina, entitled to access, and are these services and benefits funded by, or in partnership with, the State, the federal government, or both?

Are the refugees resettling in Spartanburg through World Relief eligible for subsidized housing, and are they allowed to utilize public job‑assistance or training services? If so, what state, federal, or other agency pays for those costs?

Will the refugees resettling in Spartanburg through World Relief be given priority for health care, welfare benefits, housing, and job assistance or training over American citizens, and especially those who are residents and taxpayers of South Carolina?

Be it further resolved that the South Carolina Department of Social Services must require and ensure accountability and transparency for the expenditure of public funds for refugee resettlement services provided directly by the department or in contract with other agencies or service providers.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Susan Alford, Director of the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

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