

U.S. House of Representatives Votes to Stop Entry of Syrian Refugees



Washington, November 20 (RHC)-- The U.S. House of Representatives ignored a veto threat by President Barack Obama Thursday and overwhelmingly approved Republican legislation erecting new hurdles for Syrian and Iraqi refugees trying to enter the United States.

Dozens of Democrats joined Republicans as the House passed the measure 289-137. That margin exceeded the two-thirds majority required to override a veto, and it came despite an early morning visit to the Capitol by top administration officials in a futile attempt to limit Democratic defections for the measure.

Thursday's vote came six days after a burst of bombings and shootings in Paris killed 132 people, wounded many more and revived post-9/11 fears in the U.S. and Europe. The attacks have turned the question of admitting people fleeing war-torn Syria and Iraq into a major political issue and many congressional Democrats were willing to vote against their party's lame duck president for fear of angering voters nervous about security at home.

The measure, which in effect would suspend admissions of Syrian and Iraqi refugees, would require the FBI to conduct background checks on people entering the U.S. from those countries. It would oblige the

heads of the FBI and Homeland Security Department and the director of national intelligence to certify to Congress that each refugee “is not a threat to the security of the United States.”

On the campaign trail, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton said the U.S. should welcome refugees from the region and bolster America’s defenses and intelligence operations.

The Obama administration wants to increase the 70,000 refugees to be admitted from around the world this year by 10,000, with much of the increase for Syrians. The White House said that of 2,174 Syrians admitted to the U.S. since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, none has been arrested or deported because of allegations they harbored extremist tendencies.

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