



Texas sues feds to keep 6 Syrian refugees out



By Julian Hattem - 12/02/15 07:31 PM EST

Texas on Wednesday sued the Obama administration and an organization that resettles refugees over plans to bring six Syrian refugees to the state later this week.

In a filing, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission accused the two of violating federal law with its plans to bring the family to Dallas on Friday.

The state asked the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas to block the resettlement and to order the defendants to “comply with their statutory and contractual duties to the state.”

Instead of working with the state to resettle refugees, as the law declares, the federal government and the International Rescue Committee “have left Texas uninformed about refugees that could well pose a security risk to Texans and without any say in the process of resettling these refugees,” the state said in its lawsuit.

“In addition to Texas undertaking more than its share in the task of resettling refugees than any other State, Texas has the sovereign authority and duty to protect the safety of its residents,” it added, noting that Texas accepts roughly 10 percent of all refugees headed to the United States.

The lawsuit is an escalation of state officials’ revolt against President Obama’s plans to bring 10,000 Syrian refugees to the country over the next year, following on fears that Islamic extremists could hide in their midst.

Shortly after deadly terrorist attacks in Paris last month, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) and **15 other governors** pledged to block refugees from resettling within their borders, even as the Obama administration warned that they **didn’t have the legal right**. According to the Obama administration’s legal reasoning, refugee resettlement is a federal matter, and states would violate the Civil Rights Act by denying the migrants service.

Fears about refugees were sparked by indications that at least one person who carried out the Paris attacks had slipped into Europe by posing as a Syrian refugee.

In its lawsuit, Texas points to the 1980 Refugee Act, which claims that the federal government must “consult regularly” with state and local governments about refugee resettlement plans before the refugees are placed within a state.

However, the government refused to abide by the state’s request to halt the refugees’ resettlement until it received information about the refugees and “appropriately addressed” its “concerns with screening procedures,” Texas said.

Refugees coming to the U.S. undergo a lengthy screening process that can last up to two years. However, national security officials have said that “**gaps**” in the available background knowledge make it impossible to get a full picture of an individual coming from a chaos-filled country such as Syria.

TAGS: Texas, Syrian refugees, International Rescue Committee