



# Village of Burr Ridge

Mayor Gary Grasso

Governor Pritzker:

September 14, 2022

Over the past week, significant attention has been given to the issue of refugees who have been bused from Texas to Chicago seeking asylum in the United States. Many, if not all, of these refugees may have experienced challenges that most of us in the United States cannot easily comprehend. If there is one thing that I hope we can agree on, it is that their quest for freedom should be facilitated now that they are legally in Illinois.

On September 7, I and other Burr Ridge officials received vague reports that an unknown number of refugees had already been bused to Burr Ridge from Chicago. As there was no notice or information from the City or State, our ability to accommodate these refugees and answer reasonable resident questions about this decision and the refugees was nullified. At your press conference this morning, you excoriated Texas Governor Abbott for not being forthcoming about his plans to bus refugees to the Chicagoland region, which in turn impairs your own ability to plan for receiving them. It is frustrating to you to want necessary information and not receive it, is it not? But when I, as Mayor of my community, asked for notice and information from you, your office called my community "xenophobic" – all because we sought the same basic information as your staff has sought from Governor Abbott. I'm not sure why you called that "grumbling" this morning. You disparage us for asking for basic courtesies and information and in the next moment issue an emergency disaster proclamation, activating the National Guard over the intermittent arrival of a mere 500 refugees from the southern border (while Governor Abbott daily deals with many thousands). That is the hubris and hypocrisy of a candidate for reelection, not a governor.

Burr Ridge is a proud community of people who come from very diverse backgrounds. We have received scores of community requests to donate resources or provide employment to these refugees. Like so many communities, many of our residents and their families are immigrants themselves. We can empathize with these refugees and want to help them, but we cannot do that effectively unless we properly communicate. You and your office have not done that and double-downed this morning when you could have shown us leadership. The residents of Burr Ridge deserve an apology from you and your press secretary for your dispersions against us only because we asked the same questions of you that you ask of Governor Abbott. Mayor Lightfoot has called me twice to offer apologies, offer assistance – and mend fences. She (belatedly) showed our community respect and was professional enough to own up to shortcomings – you cannot?

I'm available for you at (312) 498-3202, day or night, to rebuild a bridge you destroyed.

Sincerely,

  
Gary Grasso, Mayor

cc: Mayor Lori Lightfoot – City of Chicago  
Governor Greg Abbott – State of Texas