



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

JB PRITZKER
GOVERNOR

September 15th, 2022

Dear Mayor Grasso:

I appreciate your commitment to be more welcoming to these asylum seekers than your initial comments suggest. I certainly would have preferred for my administration to be in contact with your office earlier, and I apologize for the inadvertent delay in contacting your office while my team was scrambling to find a place for these 64 people – mostly women and children – to sleep.

As we move forward constructively together, I also hope you reflect on the negative environment you created for these asylum seekers with your public comments and take this opportunity to apologize to them for creating such an unwelcoming reception.

I would like to share a few examples of statements that these migrants could have heard from you:

- You said that they were “supposedly” here legally. They are actually here legally, under a process established for decades.
- You threatened the business license of the hotel that is contracted by the state for emergency housing. This attempt at fear-mongering has a chilling effect on businesses and raises community concerns.
- You said that no additional asylum seekers would be welcome “without Village consent and planning – if at all.” The state has a contract with the hotel to provide emergency rooms. We used this contract for Afghan refugees in February and March of 2022.

My administration will continue to be in touch with you and your office to help address any questions that you have. In fact, my office called twice on Thursday, Sept. 8 and then put you in direct contact with an official at the Illinois of Emergency Management Agency who can quickly answer most of your questions. As one of the state’s lead agencies, they have the best ability to provide accurate and timely information, and track down any additional information you seek.

However, I note for the record that your initial questions focused on the asylum seekers’ legal status, not the obligations of your municipality or desire to help them.

As you are well aware, the State of Illinois has significantly more responsibilities to these asylum seekers than the Town of Burr Ridge, but I am pleased to see that you believe we all share the moral responsibility to be more welcoming.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB Pritzker".

Governor JB Pritzker