

Refugee Advocates Call on Congress to Restore the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program

FEBRUARY 13, 2019

Dear Honorable Members of The 116th Congress:

Over the past two years, the administration has made drastic changes to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), resulting in human tragedy and long-term damage to the United States' ability to respond to displacement crises. We urge Members of Congress to utilize their oversight authority to protect and rebuild the USRAP so that its legacy can continue as a pillar of U.S. leadership.

Following executive orders that suspended the entire USRAP for months, the administration has continued to dismantle the program by setting refugee admissions numbers at historic lows. Last year, the administration failed to meet even half of its own 45,000 admissions number, and this year the President set that number at an all-time low of 30,000. With less than 6,000 refugees resettled in the first fiscal quarter, the administration is once again failing to meet even its own low goal. It is critical that the administration resettle every one of those 30,000 refugees in FY 2019. There is absolutely no reason why this low number cannot be met, as the United States has admitted, on average, 80,000 refugees each year since 1980.

Resettlement is the last resort for refugees – people who have been persecuted for their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group – who cannot return to their home country and cannot rebuild their lives in the country where they first fled. That's why, in the wake of World War II, congregations and community members across the United States built what we now know to be the USRAP. The program has a legacy of bipartisanship, with Congress unanimously passing The Refugee Act of 1980 and both sides of the aisle celebrating the resettlement of refugees from Nazi Germany, Vietnam, Cuba, Sudan, Burma, and Iraq. The State Department, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, FBI, and National Counterterrorism Center conduct interviews, background checks, biometric scans, and security screenings for every refugee before they are invited to be resettled in the United States.

The USRAP is also a strategic component of U.S. foreign policy. In today's global displacement crisis, U.S. allies including Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Uganda, Sudan, and Kenya are hosting millions of refugees. As we strive to promote regional stability and international security, it is critical that the United States both provide infrastructure assistance and increase resettlement to alleviate pressure on these allies. By reducing our commitments on resettlement, the administration has made it more difficult for the United States to credibly ask other countries to host refugees and to advance our own foreign policy interests.

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We stand ready and willing to work with Members of Congress to see that the USRAP continues to be a life-saving program that demonstrates the best of who we are as a country.

Sincerely,

National

Adrian Dominican Sisters
Agency for New Americans
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
American Jewish World Service
Anti-Defamation League
AsylumConnect
Bethany Christian Services
Capuchin Province of St. Joseph
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Victims of Torture
Church World Service
Coalition on Human Needs
Congregation of Divine Providence of Kentucky
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Daughters of Charity – USA
Disciples Home Missions
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Dominican Sisters of Adrian
Dominican Sisters of Peace
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative
Engage Action
Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Franciscan Action Network
Freedom Network USA
HIAS
Hispanic Federation
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights First

Immigrant Families Together Foundation
International Institute of Minnesota
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
Islamic Relief USA
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Priests of the Sacred Heart, US Province
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of North America
Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Lutheran Services in America
Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Immigration Law Center
National Justice for Our Neighbors
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Survivor Network, Policy
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity, Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
One Journey
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness
Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order
Refugee Point
Saint Francis Ministries
School Sisters of Notre Dame – Central Pacific Province
Shoulder to Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims; Upholding American Values
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross USA Province
Sisters of the Holy Cross
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
The America Team for Displaced Eritreans
The Episcopal Church
The Hat Project
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ)
United Church of Christ
World Relief

Alabama

HICA! Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama
Beloved Community Church, UCC
Birmingham Interfaith Refugee Ministry
Faith in Action Alabama
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Unitarian Universalist Church of Birmingham

Arizona

Immigrant Families Together – AZ
Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest
National Council of Jewish Women /AZ Section
Shadow Rock United Church of Christ
The Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans
Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona Network

Arkansas

Canopy NWA
Faith Voices Arkansas

California

Al Otro Lado
Brentwood Presbyterian Church
Centro Legal de la Raza
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
CPMC
Culver City Presbyterian Church
Diocese of Oakland-Retired
Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose
Dominican Sisters of San Rafael
Episcopal Diocese of Northern CA
Felician Sisters of North America
Franciscans for Justice
Haitian Bridge Alliance
ILA
Interfaith Refugee & Immigration Service
International Institute of the Bay Area
Knox Presbyterian Church
La Maestra Community Health Centers
Mission Santa Clara
North County Immigration Task Force
Opening Doors, Inc.
Pilgrim United Church of Christ
Presbytery of the Pacific
Presentation Sisters S.F. C.A.

Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Western American Province
Religious Sisters of Charity
Retired-Diocese of Oakland, California
Roman Catholic
San Diego Peace Corps Association
Services, Immigrant Rights & Education Network (SIREN)
Society of the Sacred Heart
St. John's Presbyterian Church in Berkeley
USC Gould School of Law International Human Rights Clinic
USC International Human Rights Clinic
World Relief in Modesto
World Relief in Southern California
World Relief Sacramento

Colorado

AFSC Colorado
Colorado African Organization
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights
Colorado Springs Sanctuary Coalition
Denver Justice Project
Denver Metro Sanctuary Coalition
ECDC African Community Center Denver
Grupo Huitzilopochtli
International Rescue Committee in Denver
Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains
Project Worthmore
Servicios de la Raza
Sisters of Saint Francis JPIC Commissioners
Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning
St. John's Episcopal Church
Village Exchange Center

Connecticut

Collaborative Center for Justice
First Congregational Church of Greenwich
IRIS – Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services
Ministerio Nueva Creacion
Quiet Corner Refugee Resettlement (QCRR)
Regional Deacon-Naugatuck Valley
School Sisters of Notre Dame
The Hope for Refugees, And Immigrants Center

Delaware

Social & Environmental Justice Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Southern Delaware
Unitarian Universalist Delaware Advocacy Network

Florida

Adrian Dominican Congregation Associate
Adrian Dominican Sisters
American Friends Service Committee
Americans for Immigrant Justice, Inc.
Barry University
Dominican Sister of Adrian
First Coast Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, Inc
Florida Council of Churches
Florida Immigrant Coalition
Florida Mission Chapter
Gainesville (FL) Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice
LCWR Immigration Coalition
LSS of NE FL
NCJW Florida
NCJW, Valencia Shores Section
River of Grass UU Congregation Service, Social Justice and Green Team Lead
Sinsinawa Dominican Associate
SSJGT River of Grass UU Congregation
St. Christopher's Episcopal Church
Gregory School
Unitarian Universalist Justice Florida
Youth Co-Op, Inc.

Georgia

Columbia Presbyterian Church
Inspiritus
New American Pathways
North Georgia Immigrant Justice

Idaho

Agency for New Americans

Illinois

Conventual Franciscans
Dominican Sisters Of Sinsinawa, WI
IL Women Religious anti Human Trafficking
Project IRENE
RefugeeOne
Springfield Dominican
Springfield Dominican Justice, Peace, & Integrity of Creation Committee
Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ
Wheaton Franciscan Justice and Peace Office
World Relief DuPage/Aurora
World Relief Moline

Indiana

Exodus Refugee Immigration, Inc.
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet
Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF
St John UCC

Iowa

Catherine McAuley Center
Crossing Borders – Dubuque
Franciscan Peace Center
Iowa UU Witness/Advocacy Network
Lutheran Services in Iowa
NE Iowa Peace & Justice Center
Pax Christi
Sisters of the Presentations

Kansas

Sr. of St. Joseph
Saint Francis Ministries

Kentucky

Episcopal Diocese of Lexington
International center of bowling green ky
International Center of Kentucky
Peace & Justice: Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky
The Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky
Western KY Refugee Mutual Assistance Society Inc.

Louisiana

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge
Louisiana Organization for Refugees and Immigrants
Refugee Congress
Southern Poverty Law Center

Maine

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project

Maryland

Asylee Women Enterprise
DC-MD Justice For Our Neighbors
Friends in Solidarity, Inc.
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia

Solidarity with Sisters
St Paul's Episcopal Church

Massachusetts

Ascentria Care Alliance
Holy Union Sisters – US Province
International Institute of New England
R.N.
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network

Michigan

Adrian Dominican Sisters
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids
Dominican Sisters of Adrian MI
Freedom House Detroit
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Sisters, Home Visitors of Mary
St. Raymond-Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church Parishioner
Swords into Plowshares Peace Center & Gallery
USCRI Detroit

Minnesota

Marilyn Geiger, OSF, Rochester, MN
Minnesota Council of Churches
Minnesota Council of Churches Refugee Services
NCJW Minnesota
Robbinsdale United Church of Christ
Saint Paul's Monastery
Sisters of Saint Francis, Rochester, Minnesota, Leadership

Missouri

CAJ
Immigrant and Refugee Committee, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood
International Institute of St. Louis
Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet
Sisters of St. Joseph
Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO
St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA)
St. Louis Peace Corps Association

Montana

Sisters of Mercy West Midwest
YWCA Missoula

New Hampshire

Ascentria Care Alliance

International Institute of New England
OFS
With Open Minds

New Jersey

All Saints Episcopal Parish
Christ Church in Bloomfield & Glen Ridge
Episcopal Diocese of Newark
Glen Ridge Congregational Church
National Council of Jewish Women, Union County Section
National Council of Jewish Women, West Morris Section
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
The Church of the Messiah, Episcopal
The Reformed Church of Highland Park
Unitarian Universalist FaithAction New Jersey

New Mexico

Catholic Charities of Southern New Mexico
New Mexico Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
Santa Fe Dreamers Project

New York

Action Corps NYC
CAMBA, Inc.
Congregation of the Infant Jesus
CSJ Non-Violence Community
Immigrant Families Together
InterFaith Works of CNY
International Institute of Buffalo
Jewish Family Service of Buffalo & Erie county New York
Journey's End Refugee Services
Leadership Team of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood, NY
New York City Peace Corps Association
New York Immigration Coalition
Professor of Law, Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University
Sacred Heart Justice and Peace Committee
Sisters of Charity of New York
Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet-Albany Province
Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood-Justice Committee
Sisters of St. Mary of Namur
University United Methodist Church

North Carolina

CareNet
Church World Service-Greensboro

Circle of Mercy Congregation
Congregational UCC
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Raleigh, NC)
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Refugee Circle of Welcome
Interfaith Refugee Ministry
North Carolina Council of Churches
Raleigh Immigrant Community Inc
Shiloh Restoration Church Inc.
Veterans for American Ideals
World Relief Durham
World Relief Triad

Ohio

Community Refugee and Immigration Services
En Camino
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, US Area
Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
International Institute of Akron
Ohio Province Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Office Justice Peace Care of Creation
Sisters of Charity of Saint Augustine
Sisters of St. Francis
Sisters of the Humility of Mary JPIC Office
St. Peter Church
Unitarian Universalist Justice Ohio
Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland

Oklahoma

The United Methodist Church
Tulsa Immigrant Resource Network
YWCA Tulsa

Oregon

EMO/SOAR
Catholic Charities Oregon
Catholic Community Services of Lane County
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)
Portland Jobs With Justice
Refugee Resettlement Coalition of Lane County
Unite Oregon

Pennsylvania

Benedictine Sisters of Erie
Bernardine Franciscan Sisters
CWS Lancaster
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart

Inner-City Neighborhood Art House
Mt. Laurel RPCVs of N.E. PA
Nationalities Service Center
New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Shiloh United Church of Christ, Danville PA
Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of Mercy
Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, PA
Sisters of the Humility of Mary
SSJ Earth Center
St. Raymond of Penafort Church

Rhode Island

Church of the Ascension
Dorcas International Institute of RI
George Wiley Center
Sisters Of St. Joseph Of Cluny

South Carolina

Lowcountry Immigration Coalition
South Carolina Christian Action Council, Inc.

South Dakota

Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota

Tennessee

Bridge Refugee Services, Inc
Glendale Baptist Church
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors
World Relief Memphis

Texas

Congregation of Divine Providence
Hope Border Institute
Immigrant Families Together, Texas Chapter
Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston
Mosaic Family Services
RAICES
Refugee Services of Texas – Dallas
YMCA of Greater Houston

Utah

One Refugee

Virginia

Church World Service – Harrisonburg
CWS Harrisonburg Immigration & Refugee Program
George Mason University
Mount Olivet United Methodist Church Haiti Ministry
Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
NOVA Friends of Refugees
One Journey
Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church
Restoration Fellowship RVA
Virginia House of Delegates
Wellspring United Church of Christ

Washington

Emmaus Church
Lutheran Community Services Northwest
St Stephen's Episcopal Church
World Relief Seattle

Washington D.C.

Good Neighbors Capitol Hill Interfaith Refugee Resettlement Project
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area
Niskanen Center
SVD, SSpS, SSpSAP Joint Immigration Venture

West Virginia

West Virginia Council of Churches

Wisconsin

Adrian Dominican Sister
Burmese Rohingya Community of Wisconsin (BRCW)
Dominicans of Sinsinawa
End Domestic Abuse WI
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
Justice for immigrants
Milwaukee Peace Corps Association
Racine Dominicanx
School Sisters of Notre Dame
School Sisters of St. Francis
Servants of Mary
Sisters of St. Joseph