

REFUGEE COUNCIL USA

March 24, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

As 209 national, state, and local organizations, we write to commend your commitment to restoring the refugee resettlement program and your administration's recent proposal to issue an Emergency Fiscal Year 2021 Presidential Determination (PD) on Refugee Admissions of 62,500. While we are encouraged by your administration's consultations with Congress regarding this proposal over a month ago, we are deeply concerned that the FY21 refugee admissions goal has not yet been signed and that the previous administration's restrictive allocations have not been lifted. This delay has caused serious harm, including the cancelation of [more than 700 flights](#) this month alone and fewer monthly refugee arrivals today than last year under the previous administration.

We urge you to immediately sign a new, revised FY21 refugee admissions goal of 62,500 and restore regional allocations based on vulnerability and need. Each day that passes without this signed executive action is another day that hundreds of particularly vulnerable refugees are forced to wait to be resettled. Urgently signing the new refugee admissions goal will honor your promise to protect refugee families - and reverse much of the damage done to the resettlement program under the previous administration.

We know our nation has strong refugee laws that provide for asylum for refugees seeking protection from persecution, as well as a strong refugee resettlement program, which have existed and operated in tandem for decades. Refugees are powerful ambassadors of our founding principles of equal opportunity, religious freedom, and liberty and justice for all. Refugees contribute greatly to the United States in ordinary times, and have continued to show up for their new communities during the COVID-19 crisis, with many working on the frontlines of the pandemic, including 176,000 refugees serving in the healthcare field and 175,000 working as part of the food supply chain. Our experiences working alongside refugees mirror the statistics that demonstrate that refugees bring tangible benefits to U.S. communities by starting businesses, becoming homeowners, revitalizing local economies, and becoming civic leaders.

March 17, 2021 was the 41st anniversary of the signing of the bipartisan Refugee Act of 1980, landmark legislation establishing the U.S. refugee resettlement program and firmly placing into law the United States' role as a compassionate, humanitarian leader in times of turmoil. Since then, communities across the country have welcomed refugees, embracing them as new neighbors and championing their contributions to this American dream. Since 1980 the United States has resettled over three million refugees across the nation. Under the previous administration, however, refugee admissions were [severely cut](#), by over 80 percent, causing irreparable damage to refugee families, American communities, and the infrastructure in place to welcome and support new arrivals.

Refugee Council USA
Amnesty International
Bethany Christian Services
Boat People SOS
Center for Applied Linguistics
Center for Migration Studies
Center for Victims of Torture
Church World Service
Ethiopian Community Development Council
Episcopal Migration Ministries
Exodus Institute
HIAS
Human Rights First
International Catholic Migration Commission
International Refugee Assistance Project
International Rescue Committee
Islamic Relief USA
Jesuit Refugee Service USA
Jubilee Campaign
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Oxfam America
Refuge Point
Refugee Congress
Refugees International
SEARAC
USAHello
United Stateless
US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
World Relief

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Delaying the revised FY21 admissions goal serves only to extend the previous administration's anti-refugee policies.

War, conflict, and persecution have forced millions to leave their homes, creating more refugees than at any other time in history, with [79.5 million displaced persons worldwide](#), including more than 29 million refugees, [1.44 million of whom are in need of resettlement](#). We are in an important moment where it is time to restore U.S. global leadership on refugee protection and resettlement. **Without a revised admissions goal, the previous administration's overly restrictive allocations remain, excluding tens of thousands of refugees in the U.S. pipeline from eligibility for resettlement in the United States.** We urge your administration to swiftly honor its commitment to restoring and strengthening the refugee resettlement program by immediately signing a new, revised FY21 refugee admissions goal of 62,500.

Please contact John Slocum, Interim Executive Director of Refugee Council USA (RCUSA), at jslocum@rcusa.org with any questions. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Afghan Diaspora for Equality and Progress
African Communities Together
America's Voice
American Jewish World Service
American Muslim Empowerment Network (AMEN)
Amnesty International USA
Asian American Federation
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Bethany Christian Services
Boat People SOS (BPSOS)
BPSOS
Bread for the World, League of Women Voters, Sioux Falls.
CARE USA
Catholic Charities
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Victims of Torture
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Church World Service
CIEL
Coalition on Human Needs
CODEPINK
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel

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Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
ECDC
ELCA
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities
Episcopal Migration Ministries
Faiths for Safe Water
Fellowship Southwest
Food Empowerment Project
Franciscan Action Network
Freedom Network USA
General Board of Church and Society-The United Methodist Church
Heartland Alliance
HIAS
Humanity & Inclusion
ICNA Relief USA Programs Inc.
Immigration Hub
InterAction
International Catholic Migration Commission
International Refugee Assistance Project
International Rescue Committee
Islamic Relief USA
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Jetpac Resource Center
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office at the Stuart Center
Kids in Need of Defense
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Lights for Liberty LLC
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS)
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
MedGlobal
Mercy Corps
MPower Change
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
National Council of Jewish Women
National Employment Law Project
National Federation of Filipino American Associations
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Litigation Alliance
National Justice for Our Neighbors
National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
National Partnership for New Americans
Network of Myanmar American Association
New American Economy

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Norwegian Refugee Council USA
OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates
One Journey
Oxfam America
Peace Action
Physicians for Peace
Poligon Education Fund
Refugee Congress
Refugee Council USA
Refugees International
Rethinking Foreign Policy
Revolutionary Love Project
Save the Children US
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
The United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society
T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
UndocuBlack Network
Union for Reform Judaism
UNITED SIKHS
United Stateless
USAHello
Voice for Refuge Action Fund
We Are All America
Welcoming America
Women’s Refugee Commission
World Education Services
World Relief
Young Center for Immigrant Children’s Rights

State and Local Organizations

Arkansas

Canopy NWA
Synod, ELCA
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

California

Interfaith Refugee & Immigration Service
Opening Doors, Inc.
Karen Organization of San Diego
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)

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Equality California
Central American Resource Center of Northern CA - CAREGEN SF
CAIR California

Connecticut

IRIS - Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services
Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants
Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible

District of Columbia

OCA-DC
Church of the Brethren Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
DC Dorothy Day Catholic Worker

Florida

Asian American Federation of Florida
Broward for Progress
Florida Asian Services
Florida Asian Women Alliance
OCA South Florida Chapter

Georgia

CAIR Georgia
Asian American Advocacy Fund
New American Pathways

Illinois

Refugee Action Network Chicago
Nikkei Uprising
RefugeeOne
OCA Greater Chicago

Indiana

Exodus Refugee Immigration Inc.

Louisiana

Louisiana Organization for Refugees and Immigrants

Maine

Gateway Community Services Maine
Maine Business Immigration Coalition
Welcoming Immigrant Neighbors, Bangor
Maine Immigrants Rights Coalition
Welcoming The Stranger

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Boundless Media

Maine Community Action Partnership

Mainers for Accountable Leadership

Ladder to the Moon Network

Unified Asian Communities

Portland Adult Education

New Mainers Resource Center

Hope Acts

Maine MultiCultural Center

Power in Community Alliances (PICA)

Bangor, Maine - Carasque, El Salvador Sister City Project

Cambodian Community Association of Maine

MidCoast New Mainers Group

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project

Azerbaijan Society of Maine

Massachusetts

RefugePoint

South Cove Community Health Center

Michigan

Association of Chinese Americans, Inc.

Michigan United/Michigan People's Campaign

Rising Voices of Asian American Families

Minnesota

United Cambodian Association of Minnesota

Isuroon

Ayada Leads

Mississippi

MS Communities United for Prosperity (MCUP)

Missouri

Bilingual In-Home Assistant Services

Nevada

Silver State Equality

New Hampshire

NuDay

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New Jersey

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

New York

Journey's End Refugee Services, Inc.
Arab American Association of New York
Chinese American Planning Council, Inc.
MinKwon Center for Community Action
Interfaith Works of CNY
ACCESS of WNY
New York Immigration Coalition

Ohio

CRIS (Community Refugee & Immigration Services)
Clinton Anti-Racism Education Space
All Nations Christian Fellowship
InterReligious Task Force on Central America and Colombia
Ohio Immigrant Alliance
OPAWL- Building AAPI Feminist Leadership
Asian Services in Action (ASIA)
Riverview International Center
Advocating Opportunity

Oklahoma

Synod, ELCA

Pennsylvania

Church World Service Lancaster
Asian Americans United
Aldea - The People's Justice Center

Rhode Island

Center For Southeast Asians

South Dakota

All Souls Church, Sioux Falls

Tennessee

Advocating Opportunity

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Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition

Texas

Every Texan (formerly Center for Public Policy Priorities)
Catholic Charities
Refugee Services of Texas
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)
Multicultural Refugee Coalition
Human Rights Initiative of North Texas
Catholic Charities
Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston
Caritas of Austin
National Council of Jewish Women

Virginia

NOVA Friends of Refugees
Church World Service Harrisonburg

Washington

Community Health Plan of Washington
World Relief Seattle
Asian Counseling and Referral Service
OCA Asian Pacific Advocates - Greater Seattle
Council on American-Islamic Relations, Washington Chapter (CAIR Washington)
OneAmerica

Wisconsin

Burmese Rohingya Community of Wisconsin (BRCW)

RCUSA is a diverse coalition advocating for just and humane laws and policies, and the promotion of dialogue and communication among government, civil society, and those who need protection and welcome. Individual RCUSA members do not all address all refugee-related issues, nor do all individual members approach common refugee-related issues identically.