

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 18, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

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Dear Mr. President:

As members of the bipartisan Refugee Caucus, we write today to urge you to recognize the importance of maintaining the life-saving United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). We understand your Administration has proposed an annual refugee admissions number of 30,000 for the fiscal year 2019. We also understand that this number is not final until a Congressional consultation has taken place. It is our hope the refugee admissions level for fiscal year 2019 will continue to align with global need and signal to the international community the U.S. will continue to be a global leader in refugee protection.

American global leadership in refugee resettlement is more critical now than ever. We are amid one of the worst refugee crises in recorded history, with 65 million people displaced, 22.5 million of whom are refugees. The refugee resettlement program has always been part of the U.S. foreign policy strategy, and because of this, it is imperative to our national security we continue to welcome properly vetted refugees. Resettlement is critical to our ability to help alleviate regional instability across the globe, maintain relationships with allies, and advance our foreign policy interests. When we resettle refugees and support our allies in refugee hosting countries, we are helping to keep ourselves safe. Moreover, the United States' historic commitment to refugee resettlement is a clear manifestation of America's longtime pledge to defend human rights. We are deeply concerned this retreat in our commitment to this durable solution could signify the United States is turning its back on these ideals, as well as the international community during a time of historic need.

Refugee resettlement has been a cornerstone of American foreign policy for decades. Historically, the United States has set an average refugee admissions goal of 95,000, and in moments of urgent need has significantly increased that number, as evidenced by record high refugee arrivals under both the Reagan and Bush administrations. Instead of stepping back from our history as a global leader in refugee resettlement, the United States must remember resettlement is a viable solution for less than one percent of the world's refugee population. Refugees identified for resettlement have no other durable solution for safety, either because

their homes have been destroyed, their countries are plagued by systemic war, or because of the persecution they face due to their religious, political, or social beliefs. Resettlement provides a safe and legal option for those most in need of safety, and the United States has a duty to protect refugees who were forced from their homes through no fault of their own.

Refugees resettled in the United States exemplify what it means to be American. In some communities, refugees invest in and start businesses at a rate twice that of the general population, which not only makes them job creators, but has helped to reinvigorate towns across this country. For some of these towns, the decline in refugee arrivals this year has had negative impacts on employers, especially those in the manufacturing, lumber, hospitality, and food production industries, that have traditionally welcomed refugees. Refugees in the United States contribute billions to our economy, and pay millions in tax dollars towards state and local governments. Refugees purchase homes, invest in educating their children, and become civically engaged, all in pursuit of the American dream. Refugees seek to give back to their host countries by volunteering and helping others in their new communities and starting or working for non-profit organizations to do the same.

It is our hope the United States will remain a beacon of hope for individuals and families seeking safety from war, violence, and persecution. We know that failing to maintain this program would likely undermine U.S. global leadership, diplomacy, and national security efforts. We urge you to demonstrate strong support for the United States Refugee Admissions Program and to commit the United States to continuing to support refugees in the coming fiscal year.

Sincerely,



Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)
Co-Chair of the Refugee Caucus



Rep. Joe Lofgren (D-CA)
Co-Chair of the Refugee Caucus



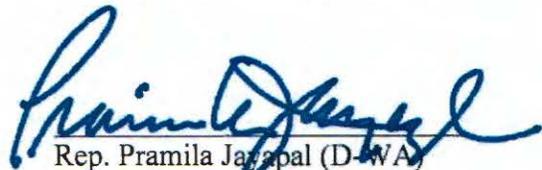
Rep. André Carson (D-IN)
Member of the Refugee Caucus



Rep. David N. Cicilline (D-RI)
Member of the Refugee Caucus



Rep. Randy Hultgren (R-IL)
Member of the Refugee Caucus



Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA)
Member of the Refugee Caucus


Rep. John Katko (R-NY)
Member of the Refugee Caucus


Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD)
Member of the Refugee Caucus


Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH)
Member of the Refugee Caucus


Rep. David Young (R-IA)
Member of the Refugee Caucus



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

October 29, 2018

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Ros-Lehtinen:

Thank you for your September 18, 2018 letter to President Trump. The White House referred your letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

DHS appreciates your continued support of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). We are proud of USRAP's longstanding history of resettling some of the world's most vulnerable refugees in the United States. Likewise, we understand the important role that refugee resettlement plays in supporting our national security and foreign policy interests.

The United States is committed to providing humanitarian support for refugees. It is important to note, however, that this support extends beyond the refugee admissions program. Our response encompasses a broad protection-based immigration structure, including the asylum program, and generous humanitarian assistance overseas.

On October 4, 2018, the President signed the Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2019 and set the refugee admissions ceiling at 30,000. The ceiling takes into account the operational realities associated with protecting national security and public safety, the need to conduct credible and reasonable fear screenings of aliens seeking protection at our borders, and the need to address the backlog of affirmative asylum cases, which stands at about 320,000 (approximately 492,000 individuals), the highest since 2002.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The co-signers of your letter will receive separate, identical responses. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 272-1940.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Francis Cissna".

L. Francis Cissna
Director