

April 13, 2020

Dear Members of Congress,

On behalf of more than 150 refugee resettlement, faith, and other humanitarian and human rights organizations, we write to you with important refugee-related requests to include in future COVID-19-related legislation. This global pandemic has brought into sharp focus the intersection of U.S. immigration and public health policy, as well as the unique challenges that refugees and immigrants face in the United States today.

Certain refugees, Special Immigrant Visa (SIVs) recipients, and others who receive resettlement services, especially recent arrivals, are being directly affected by COVID-19. Some are unable to receive the expanded benefits enacted by Congress in previous COVID-19-related legislation. **Leaving out some communities leaves all communities at greater risk.** We are looking to Congress to support the refugee community in the United States and ensure their basic needs are met to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

The United States has also temporarily suspended refugee admissions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are particularly concerned about how many refugees, especially family reunification cases and refugees who are nationals subject to Security Advisory Opinion requirements, have already faced exceptional delays that leave refugee families separated and dramatically plummet arrivals. We are deeply concerned that the present pandemic will serve to extend even further about the significant delays in refugee and SIV processing. Congress should see that the administration restores a good faith effort to continue robust refugee admissions.

As Congress considers the fourth package (COVID #4), **it is critical that any proposal prioritize resources for our refugee neighbors and ensure that all community members are able to mitigate risks to their vulnerability to COVID-19.** Together, we urge Congress to:

1. Provide \$642 million in Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) funds for the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for resettlement services (including Transition and Medical Services (TAMS) and Refugee Support Services (RSS)). This funding would go toward cash and medical assistance, housing/rent, utilities, transportation, food, and health needs unavailable through normally operating public channels.
2. Clarify that all refugees, including those who were admitted in 2019 and 2020, should be eligible for the direct cash rebate.
3. Direct the administration to strengthen direct support for recent and new arrivals, stabilize the refugee resettlement network, and continue to facilitate the resettlement of refugees, including unaccompanied refugee minors (URMs), who are in immediate danger and in need of urgent care.
4. Ensure that the administration extends security check validity periods for refugees and special immigrants, resumes refugee admissions expeditiously consistent with general travel restrictions from refugees' countries of residence, and reallocates refugee admissions to ensure that the Presidential Determination for fiscal year 2020 can be reached.
5. Ensure the administration extends validity periods and deadlines as a matter of policy and authorizes or extends parole during the coronavirus-19 pandemic.

In light of the coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic, we look to Congress to ensure all community members are able to mitigate risks to their vulnerability to COVID-19. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please contact Meredith Owen at mowen@cwsglobal.org with further questions.

Sincerely,

ACCESS (National)
Advocating Opportunity (National)
Africa Ministries Church (Texas)
African American Ministers In Action (National)
African Communities Together (National)
Alliance of Baptists (National)
Amaanah Refugee Services (Texas)
American Jewish World Service (National)
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (National)
Amnesty International USA (National)
APIC Snohomish County (Washington)
Armenian Relief Society of Western USA, Social Services (California)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC (National)
Asian Counseling and Referral Service (Washington)
BakerRipley (Texas)
Bellevue PSOT (New York)
Bethany Christian Services (National)
Bread for the World (National)
CASA (National)
Catholic Charities Dallas (Texas)
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (National)
Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) (Texas)
Center for Victims of Torture (National)
Child Welfare League of America (National)
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice (National)
Church of the Brethren/Quaker (Maryland)
Church World Service (National)
Church World Service Virginia (Virginia)
City Harvest Mission Church (North Carolina)
Community Development YMCA (California)
Community Refugee & Immigration Services (CRIS) (Ohio)
Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces (Arizona)
Council for Global Equality (National)
Dallas Zomi Community Church (Texas)
Dash Network (Texas)
Demand Progress (National)
DFW Asylum Seeker Housing Network (Texas)
Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries (National)
Doctors for Camp Closure (National)
Doctors Without Borders at UT Austin (student chapter) (Texas)
Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations (National)
Equality Labs (National)
Equality North Carolina (North Carolina)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (National)
Exodus Refugee Immigration Inc. (Indiana)
Faith Action Network (Washington)
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) (New York)
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Tucson (Arizona)
Franciscan Action Network (National)
Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help (National)
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor (Ohio)
Franciscans for Justice (California)
Freedom Network USA (National)
Graduate College of Social Work (Texas)

HAITIAN BRIDGE ALLIANCE (California)
Heartfelt Tidbits, Inc. (Ohio)
Height Assembly Of God (Texas)
HIAS (National)
Hispanic Federation (National)
Hope of Life Baptist Church (Texas)
Human Rights Initiative of North Texas (Texas)
ICNA RELIEF USA (National)
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization - IRCO (Oregon)
Immigrant and Refugee Law Center (Ohio)
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (Minnesota)
International House (North Carolina)
International Life Worship (Michigan)
International Refugee Assistance Project (National)
International Rescue Committee (National)
IRIS - Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (Connecticut)
Jewish Care Program (New Mexico)
Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda, Contra Costa Counties (California)
Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis (Missouri)
Jewish Community Relations Council/AJC - Detroit (Michigan)
Jewish Council for Public Affairs (National)
Jewish Family & Career Services of Louisville (Kentucky)
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis (Minnesota)
Jewish Family Service of Colorado (Colorado)
Jewish Federation of Chicago (Illinois)
Jewish Federation of Reading (Pennsylvania)
Jewish Women International (National)
Journey's End Refugee Services (New York)
Justice in Aging (National)
Justice in Motion (National)
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (National)
Leadership Conference of Women Religious (National)
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) (National)
Libyan American Alliance (Washington, DC)
Lighthouse Myanmar Ministries (Texas)
Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry NJ (New Jersey)
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (National)
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (Maryland, Virginia and DC)
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (National)
Milwaukee Jewish Federation Jewish Community Relations Council (Wisconsin)
MPower Change (National)
Multicultural Refugee Coalition (Texas)
Muslim Advocates (National)
Muslim Space (Texas)
Myanmar Christian Church (Oklahoma)
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd (National)
National Center for Transgender Equality (National)
National Council of Jewish Women (Texas)
National Health Law Program (National)
National Immigration Law Center (National)
National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights (National)
National Partnership for Women & Families (National)
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (National)

New American Pathways (Georgia)
New York Immigration Coalition (New York)
North Austin Muslim Community Center (Texas)
OneAmerica (Washington)
Oromo Youth of Nashville (Tennessee)
Oxfam America (National)
Partnership for America's Children (National)
Partnership for the Advancement and Immersion of Refugees (PAIR) (Texas)
Poder Latinx (National)
Poligon Education Fund (Washington, DC)
Project Extreme (New York)
Refugee & Immigrant Services Northwest (Washington)
RefugeeOne (Illinois)
RESULTS DC (Washington, DC)
Rian Immigrant Center (Massachusetts)
School Sisters of St Francis (Pennsylvania)
Services, Immigrant Rights & Education Network (SIREN) (California)
Sisters and Cojourners of the Sisters of Saint Francis, Rochester, Minnesota (Minnesota)
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee (National)
Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities (New York)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (National)
Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund (National)
SparkAction (National)
SPLC Action Fund (Based in Alabama with offices in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Washington, D.C.)
Subcontinental Drift (National)
Texas Chin Christian Church (Texas)
The Alliance (Texas)
The Firestarter Group (Texas)
The Forum for Youth Investment (National)
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society (National)
TN Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (Tennessee)
Trinity Church, Northport Michigan (Michigan)
Trinity United Church of Christ (Michigan)
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (National)
Union for Reform Judaism (National)
United Stateless (Pennsylvania)
University YMCA New American Welcome Center (Illinois)
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights (Virginia)
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations (Virginia)
We Are All America (National)
We Hire Refugees (Oregon)
Witness at the Border (National)
World Relief (National)
YMCA New American Welcome Center (Pennsylvania)
YMCA of Greater Houston (Texas)
YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities (Minnesota)
YMCA of York and York County (Pennsylvania)
Zomi Agape Church, Inc (Kentucky)
Zomi Christian Canaan Church (Michigan)
Zomi Christian Church Austin (Texas)