



Voice for Refuge Policy Platform

The United States was founded by refugees fleeing religious persecution, and [built by](#) generations of refugees and immigrants. There are times in our history when we have rejected refugees, and we look back on those times with shame. And there have been other times when we have demonstrated our values by serving as a beacon of hope for the persecuted - a golden door for the [tired, tempest-tost, huddled masses yearning to breathe free](#).

[Reclaiming this identity is the ideal to which we aspire.](#)

We have a long way to go. Since the start of the Trump Administration, refugee resettlement has been slashed by [more than 80%](#), from the historic average of 95,000 to an all-time low of 18,000. The Muslim, African, refugee and asylum bans have made it nearly impossible for families seeking safety to secure protection in the United States. The Trump administration has also improperly denied, banned, blocked, and turned away asylum seekers at the U.S. border. All of these policies are set against the backdrop of a raging displacement crisis, with more refugees in need of protection than at any time [in history](#).

By [definition](#), refugees are persecuted because of their ethnicity, nationality, religion, political opinion, or social group. Resettlement is the last resort for refugees who can't return to their home country or safely rebuild their lives nearby. Fewer than one percent of refugees will ever be resettled to one of [27 resettlement countries](#). Resettlement is an effective tool of U.S. foreign policy, allowing the U.S. to encourage other countries to keep their doors open to refugees and thus promote global stability. Refugees are pillars of the U.S. economy, [working hard](#), [paying taxes](#), and [creating jobs](#).

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) was created in 1980 with strong bipartisan support that [continues to this day](#). Thousands of volunteers welcome refugees across the country, and a [majority of Americans](#) oppose laws that keep refugees out. In response to a now-enjoined executive order allowing states and localities to ban refugees, [43 governors and more than 100 local officials](#) affirmed their support for refugee resettlement. Refugees are thoroughly vetted with mandatory biometric screenings, medical tests, and in-person interviews with the Department of Homeland Security.

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Refugees are vital parts of our communities and our economies. Welcoming them and including their voices in our political process is good for America.

Voice for Refuge works to enact policies that recognize the dignity of refugees and the important role of refugee resettlement and access to asylum.

We call on policymakers to:

1. Restore the refugee admissions program. We urge the administration to set a 125,000 refugee admissions goal and invest in rebuilding the international and domestic infrastructure of the USRAP. We call on Congress to pass The GRACE Act ([S.1088](#) / [H.R.2146](#)), which would set a minimum resettlement goal of 95,000 in keeping with historic norms. We also support the Lady Liberty Act ([H.R.3376](#)) which would set that minimum at 110,000.
2. Repeal the [Muslim](#), [African](#), [refugee](#), and [asylum bans](#). We call on the administration to repeal these bans, and urge Congress to pass the NO BAN Act ([S.1123](#) / [H.R.2214](#)), which would end and prevent such discriminatory bans in the future.
3. Improve access to asylum, refugee resettlement, and humanitarian protection. We urge Congress to pass The Refugee Protection Act ([S.2936](#) / [H.R.5210](#)), which would improve the refugee resettlement program, restore and increase access to asylum, protect unaccompanied children and refugee families, and increase support for refugees as they rebuild their lives.
4. Empower refugees to thrive. We call on Congress to pass the New Deal for New Americans Act ([S.3470](#) / [H.R.4928](#)), which would establish programs that welcome immigrants and make English language learning, workforce development, and U.S. citizenship more accessible. We also urge state and local policy makers to remove barriers that refugees face in accessing education, workforce development, and drivers licenses, all of which are key to integration success.
5. Affirm the importance of refugee protection. We urge local and state officials to support welcoming and pro-refugee resolutions, and call on Members of Congress to support resolutions that underscore the importance of refugee resettlement and access to protection, including [S.Res.254](#) / [H.Res.444](#) reaffirming the bipartisan commitment to refugee protection; [S.Res.32](#) and [S.Res.484](#) condemning the Muslim, African, refugee, and asylum bans; and [S.Res.545](#) / [H.Res.902](#) celebrating the 40th anniversary of the 1980 Refugee Act. We also urge all Members of the House of Representatives to join the bipartisan [Congressional Refugee Caucus](#) to demonstrate their support for refugee protection.

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To see how Members of Congress compare in their support of refugee protection, see Voice for Refuge's scorecards [here](#).

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