

Immigration

Keep Our Nation's Doors Open to Immigrants and Refugees

Earlier this year, the Administration issued a number of executive orders related to immigration and refugee policy. Notably, these orders aimed to restrict entry for refugees from predominantly Muslim countries, halt federal funding for “sanctuary cities,” and expand detention for immigrants and asylum-seekers. The President’s FY 2018 budget requests a 31% cut to refugee resettlement programs, while allocating an additional \$4.5 billion in funding for immigrant detention and deportation—a 23% increase from 2016.

JCPA has advocated for more than 70 years on behalf of immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers who hope to build a better life for themselves and their children. We continued to do so this year by prioritizing the issue, filing joint amicus curie briefs opposing the executive order, and advocating in coalition for generous refugee policies that maintain rigorous background checks.

- **Congress should support a refugee resettlement cap of at least 75,000, which is already insufficient, especially given the severity of the refugee crises and growing famine in East Africa.** As a nation built by immigrants and refugees, the U.S. should seek to maximize, not minimize, the number of people we welcome and protect. Family reunification and generous refugee admissions must remain cornerstones of our immigration policy.
- **Closing our nation’s doors to immigrants and refugees would contradict the fundamental Jewish belief in “welcoming the stranger.”** The Jewish community has always been deeply committed to maintaining a generous immigration system. We champion a fair and generous legal immigration policies as an expression of our country’s core values of refugee protection, family reunification, and economic opportunity.
- **The U.S. has one of the most stringent vetting programs in the world.** Our immigration policy must balance national security concerns with the protection of civil and human rights. We cannot let legitimate concerns about radical Islam undermine a core national purpose—providing a home for immigrants. The American immigrant experience is one of our country’s greatest sources of strength. Newcomers are essential to the fabric of our society, enriching our culture and boosting our economy.
- **Congress should revive comprehensive immigration reform that balances reasonable security standards with the protection of civil and human rights.** While the U.S. must have measures in place to determine who may enter and remain in the U.S., as well as identify and prevent the entry of those who pose a security risk, these safeguards must not be made at the expense of civil, worker, or human rights. Effective enforcement can only be accomplished as part of comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level.
- **Enforcement efforts—particularly detention and deportation—should focus on dangerous criminal or terrorist migrants rather than undocumented immigrants seeking economic opportunities who have committed no crime other than illegally crossing the border.** Our immigration policy must account for this challenge in a manner that respects the human dignity and human rights of those who wish to enter. A policy that targets, or unintentionally

ensnares, such individuals stands in contrast to JCPA's support for comprehensive immigration reform that values the rights of undocumented immigrants, especially children and young adults, who come to the U.S. for better economic opportunities and a pathway to earn legal status.

- **Enforcement actions conducted in homes and workplaces should be narrowly tailored, respectful of human rights, and conducted in a manner consistent with due process.** Such action can cause needless trauma and hardship, separating families and threatening the basic rights of immigrants and U.S. citizens alike.
- **Local law enforcement agencies are not responsible for immigration enforcement.** Eliminating the firewall between federal and local law enforcement threatens to seriously compromise the police's ability to keep communities safe by undermining trust and communication between police and immigrant populations. Rather than making communities more secure, such measures would drive a wedge between local law enforcement and the communities they are entrusted to protect.