

Keep Our Nation's Doors Open to Refugees and Asylum Seekers

For over 70 years, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) has advocated on behalf of refugees and asylum-seekers who hope to build a better life for themselves and their children. Over the past year, the Administration has instituted a number of changes to U.S. asylum and refugee policies, such as significantly reducing overall U.S. refugee admissions, restricting entry for refugees from several predominantly Muslim countries, and expanding detention for immigrants and asylum seekers.

The U.S. refugee resettlement cap is currently set at just 30,000 for FY19, the lowest ceiling set by any president since the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program was established in 1980. It is unlikely that the U.S. will resettle even that many, despite the unprecedented refugee crisis. The United Nations estimates that the number of forcibly displaced people due to conflict, violence, and persecution is now 68 million, with over 25 million of them being refugees. The President must set the yearly ceiling for refugee admissions by September 30 after “appropriate consultation” with Congress.

- **Congress must support a refugee resettlement cap of at least 75,000 in FY20, which is already insufficient.** The 30,000 figure for this fiscal year is a historic low. We urge Congress to push the Administration to increase it to at least 75,000 for next fiscal year.
- **JCPA urges Congress to provide the necessary oversight to ensure that the United States actually resettles 30,000 refugees in FY19.** This is particularly important because in FY18, with a Presidential Determination of 45,000, the U.S. only resettled 22,491 refugees. 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. For example, the Jewish community has played an integral role in welcoming refugees in the United States for more than 100 years and must not be cut from the U.S. refugee resettlement program. We champion 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 our 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 economy.

For more information, please contact Tammy Gilden, Senior Policy Associate at the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, at tgilden@thejcpa.org.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) is the hub of the Jewish community relations network, representing over 125 local Jewish community relations councils and 16 national Jewish agencies. Together our network builds consensus

on behalf of the entire Jewish community to promote a just and pluralistic American society, advocate for human rights around the world, and support Israel's quest for peace and security.