

Immigration

Over the past year, the Administration has instituted a number of changes to U.S. immigration and refugee policies, such as terminating Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), reducing overall U.S. refugee admissions, and restricting entry for refugees from predominantly Muslim countries.

For over 70 years, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) has advocated on behalf of immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers who hope to build a better life for themselves and their children. Below is a brief overview of our positions relating to immigration and refugee policy.

Pass a Clean Dream Act

With DACA slated to end in March, over 800,000 Dreamers will soon be at risk of detention and deportation. Over 10,000 have already lost their status. Under DACA, eligible Dreamers voluntarily shared their personal information with the federal government and passed extensive background checks, enabling them to live, work, and study without fear of deportation. Ending protections inflicts needless suffering, separates families, and will cost our economy billions over the next decade.

- **Congress must immediately pass a clean Dream Act.** This bipartisan bill would grant permanent residence status and provide a path to citizenship for Dreamers who graduate from U.S. high schools and attend college, enter the workforce, or enlist in the military. While DACA provided temporary relief, these young people deserve the chance to live, study, and work in the U.S. without constant fear of detention and deportation.
- **Effective enforcement can only be accomplished as part of comprehensive immigration reform that balances security standards with the protection of civil and human rights.** Congress should only support bipartisan legislation that would provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, and reject partisan bills that seek to increase border security and enforcement with comprehensive reform. JCPA believes that such reforms must uphold American values of refugee protection, family reunification and economic opportunity.
- **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. Enforcement efforts—particularly detention and deportation—should not target or unintentionally ensnare undocumented immigrants seeking economic opportunities who have committed no crime other than illegally crossing the border.

Protect Refugees

The U.S. refugee resettlement cap is currently set at just 45,000 for FY18, the lowest ceiling set by any president since the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program was established in 1980. The Administration has also issued a number of executive orders on immigration and refugee policy, aiming to restrict entry for refugees from predominantly Muslim countries, halt federal funding for “sanctuary cities,” and expand detention for immigrants and asylum-seekers.

- **Congress must support a refugee resettlement cap of at least 75,000 in FY19, which is already insufficient, especially given the severity of the refugee crises and growing famine in East Africa.** We also urge Congress to provide the necessary oversight to ensure that the United States actually resettles 45,000 refugees in FY18. In order to reach this target, the U.S. must resettle 3,750 refugees per month. We are already 8,000 refugees behind where it should be if we are to have any chance of meeting this goal. 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 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 boosting our economy.

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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.