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**Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.**

Statement submitted to the
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security

**"Oversight of the United States Refugee Admissions Program"
Hearing on October 26, 2017**

With more than 65 million displaced persons and over 22.5 million registered refugees globally, it is more important than ever to preserve United States leadership on refugee resettlement. An important humanitarian and diplomatic tool, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) has experienced a long tradition of bipartisan support since its founding over three decades ago. With an average admissions ceiling of 95,000 refugees per year, Presidents Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama all understood the invaluable role refugee resettlement plays in this country's humanitarian, national security, and foreign policy priorities.

The 120 day refugee ban implemented by the Trump Administration ended earlier this week and the Administration immediately signed a new Executive Order, putting in place a de facto ban against refugees from eleven countries¹, nine of which are Muslim-majority. Forty-four percent of refugees resettled in the United States during fiscal year 2017 were from one of these eleven countries. Under the guise of the Security Advisory Opinion (SAO) process, utilized by the Department of State in tandem with U.S. intelligence agencies and the security community to combat terrorism, espionage, or illegal transport of technology, refugees listed as nationals of "SAO countries" are banned for 90 days while an "in-depth threat assessment" is conducted. Refugees from the eleven countries are already subject to increased vetting in the form of SAO processing. The Administration may also expand the classes of refugees subjected to the SAO process, and have hinted that women and children as young as eleven will be processed using SAO, further delaying their applications.

With its new EO, the Administration has also indefinitely stopped family reunification in the form of follow-to-join options for spouses and children for refugees already in the United States, leaving hundreds of children orphaned in insecure conditions abroad.

¹ List of SAO countries impacted by the new USRAP policies: Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and stateless Palestinians.

United States. A National Bureau of Economic Research study found that after twenty years, refugees pay \$21,000 more in taxes than they receive in benefits. They have high rates of entrepreneurship, homeownership, and have made significant contributions to states like California, Michigan, Minnesota, Texas, and Georgia. More than 84 percent of refugees who have been in the country for 25 years have taken steps towards citizenship, indicating the United States is their true home.

Beyond statistics, refugees also integrate into the fabric of American society. They become business owners and homeowners in previously blighted neighborhoods, bringing not only economic opportunities, but a sense of community. They become our religious leaders, build our houses, clean our hotel rooms, and they and their children attend college. They are artists, farmers, janitors, CEOs, and Secretaries of State. Most importantly, they are our neighbors.

The USRAP has successfully provided protection to more than three million refugees since the Program's founding in 1980, and must continue to be a world leader on resettlement. The United States has historically prioritized resettlement of the most vulnerable refugees: women and children, victims of torture, and religious minorities. These refugees understandably arrive with very few means and receive limited support that sets them up for success.

HIAS, the American Jewish community's global organization engaged in refugee work, is deeply committed to preserving a robust refugee resettlement program, for we know all too well what it means when the United States closes its doors. America's shameful past of passing restrictive immigration laws during World War II left tens of thousands of Jews to perish in Europe. Mandated by our scripture to "welcome the stranger," we are concerned by the diminution of the United States Refugee Admissions Program. Abandoning the mantle of leadership on refugee protection and resettlement during the world's largest refugee crisis demonstrates a dangerous isolationism that risks the permanent erosion of the founding principles of our country.



Statement of the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) at the Urban Justice Center

Submitted to the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, of the
U.S. House of Representatives

Hearing, "Oversight of the United States Refugee Admissions Program"

About the International Refugee Assistance Project

The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) at the Urban Justice Center provides comprehensive legal representation to refugees and displaced persons in the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Since our establishment, IRAP has provided legal assistance to thousands of people seeking legal pathways from conflict zones to safe countries. IRAP provides *pro bono* legal representation, legal advice, and expert referrals to refugees all over the world.

IRAP's goal is to ensure that available services and legal protections go to those who are most in need. Our clients include religious minorities subject to targeted violence, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, children with medical emergencies for which local treatment is not available, LGBTI individuals, and interpreters under threat in retaliation for their work with the United States and NATO.

The Presidential Determination for USRAP for Fiscal Year 2018

The Presidential Determination for refugee resettlement for fiscal year 2018 capped refugee admissions at 45,000, an almost 60 percent decrease of available resettlement places from last year's ceiling. This ceiling is the lowest set by a President in over three decades. IRAP is extremely concerned about this abdication in humanitarian leadership from the United States, at a time when the world is witnessing the highest number of refugees since World War II. Thousands of refugees in life-threatening circumstances will lose their chance at being resettled to safety.

By reducing the scope of U.S. resettlement, the Administration has left tens of thousands of refugees in indefinite limbo. These are individuals who have fled from persecution and terror. Among those of key concern to IRAP are Iraqis who are at risk because of their service to the U.S. government. The Iraqi SIV program formerly provided an avenue to safety to Iraqi wartime partners. This program, though, closed to new applications on September 30, 2014. For anyone who has worked for the U.S. government since 2013, the only avenue to safety is through USRAP's Direct Access Program. At least 50,000 Iraqis in Iraq are waiting for an interview, all of whom have a close affiliation to the United States. Many

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Security Screening

On October 24, 2017, the Administration ordered new restrictions on refugees seeking safety in the United States. Under the newly announced rules for vetting refugees, the government will halt processing for individuals from 11 countries that require security advisory opinions (SAOs). This is an inexplicable delay given that the Administration just completed a 120-day period of security review of USRAP. The Administration will have paused the refugee family reunification (follow-to-join I-730) program indefinitely. IRAP understands that other additional security measures are planned, including the collection of even more data on refugees in the resettlement process, which would further delay an already rigorous and lengthy process that takes 18 to 24 months on average to complete. The new measures will, as with the Presidential Determination, mean indefinite limbo for thousands of the most vulnerable refugees.

In its announcement, the administration did not provide any reasons as to why these particular measures are needed or how they will improve security; IRAP condemns this backhanded effort to limit refugee resettlement even further than the historically low 45,000 refugee ceiling that the President set for this fiscal year.

Further, IRAP urges caution in using social media for refugee screening. The Department of Homeland Security's own Inspector General found that early social media screening pilots had to be done manually, did not find security risks even for people who were otherwise believed to pose risks, and lacked clear criteria for usage. Massive collections of new information through social media will provide little benefit to American national security: first, because truly dangerous actors are likely to evade detection and to decline to self-report their social media information. Second, reviewing social media information is massively time- and resource-intensive. In DHS's pilot, pre-Executive Order security screening proved so intensive that social media checks were ineffective at identifying security concerns that were not already known to DHS.

Finally, with dedicated resources needed to review massive amounts of data from social media, only select amounts of information will be reviewed, opening the door wide to discrimination on the basis of religion, political beliefs, and national origin. This data collection is likely to be implemented in a discriminatory fashion, and, in keeping with other immigration vetting programs, burdening Muslims (and those with connections or perceived connections to Muslims) with further long delays and arbitrary denials in immigration benefits.

Central American Minors (CAM)

The Administration also signaled its intention to phase out the Central American Minors (CAM) refugee program, which allows children to reunite with guardians with legal status in the United States. This,

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House Judiciary Committee
Subject: "Oversight of the United States Refugee Admissions Program"
October 26, 2017
By Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) appreciates the opportunity to submit our views for this hearing on the Oversight of the United States Refugee Admissions Program.

Our organization has long advocated for the protection of refugees, unaccompanied children, asylum-seekers, and trafficking victims, and as such we are committed to the continuation and strengthening of United States Refugee Admissions Program.

The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) is the national organization established by Lutheran churches in the United States to serve uprooted people. LIRS is nationally recognized for its leadership advocating on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, immigrants in detention, families fractured by migration and other vulnerable populations, and for providing services to refugees through our work with 28 local resettlement partners in 48 sites through the nation.

LIRS advocates for a responsive resettlement program that includes robust funding to meet the needs of all vulnerable refugees eligible for service. As a nation that has historically welcomed refugees in need of protection, we should honor our history by ensuring appropriate funding to compassionately welcome all vulnerable people.

The United States Refugee Resettlement Program has existed since the bipartisan Refugee Act of 1980. Since then, we as a nation have agreed to welcome some of the most vulnerable people from around the world. In order for this program to continue to function, LIRS urges Congress to exercise its responsibility and provide the needed oversight for this important program to continue to function as it always has.

As this committee looks into the work of the United States Refugee Admissions Program and its different components, we urge its members to keep in mind the following principles to ensure the continuity and modernization of this important program and its contributions to communities nationwide:

- Community engagement is critical throughout the different stages of refugee resettlement—protection, stabilization and integration.
- Family unity and family reunification are basic human rights and are essential for long-term integration.
- Federally-funded programs should be outcome-driven, with basic standards and the flexibility to be responsive to the diverse strengths and needs of refugees arriving today.
- Federal agencies should improve coordination to better capitalize on the strengths of the various federal and non-federal actors to limit duplication of effort and maximize impact.



Written Testimony of

**William Canny
Executive Director**

**Migration and Refugee Services
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

for

**House Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security Hearing**

“Oversight of the United States Refugee Admissions Program”

**2141 Rayburn House Office Building
9 a.m., Thursday, October 26, 2017**

- maintain overall commitment to keep strong each component of the refugee protection system, such as resettlement, and asylum, and make optimum use of them all;
- avoid an "assimilation screen-out test" that risks becoming a mask for discrimination that violates American principles of equality for all and freedom of religion, rather continue vigorous efforts to help improve newcomers' ability to integrate and contribute to their new U.S. communities.

II. The Catholic Church has deep concern for refugees and migrants.

The Catholic Church has a long history of solidarity, pastoral care, community outreach, service, and advocacy related to people migrating to the United States. Migration and Refugee Services of the USCCB (USCCB/MRS) is the largest U.S. refugee resettlement agency, welcoming and helping to integrate refugees, regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity, or religion. Working in partnership with the U.S. government, state and local governments, and local communities, it has resettled over one million of the three million refugees who have come to our country since 1975. It also serves as a national leader in caring for unaccompanied refugee and migrant children and victims of human trafficking. USCCB/MRS works through 80 Catholic Dioceses and Archdioceses and their Catholic Charities agencies in some 100 offices and sub-offices in 37 states across the country to welcome and serve refugees, unaccompanied alien children, and victims of human trafficking.

The Catholic Church's solidarity and service related to migrants stems from the belief that every human being is created in God's image, and from the Church's experience that this is often forgotten in the cases of migrants and refugees who are frequently marginalized and mistreated. Pope Pius XII reaffirmed the Catholic Church's commitment to care for pilgrims, aliens, exiles, refugees, and migrants of every kind, affirming that all peoples have the right to conditions worthy of human life and, if these conditions are not present, the right to migrate.² Meanwhile, we advocate to address the root causes for such poor conditions while also protecting those forced to migrate. In our joint pastoral letter, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope, A Pastoral Letter Concerning Migration*,³ January 23, 2003, the U.S. and Mexican Catholic bishops call for nations to work toward a "globalization of solidarity." In that document, we affirm that "Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection. Those who flee wars and persecution should be protected by the global community." No. 99. We likewise stated that "because of their heightened vulnerability, unaccompanied minors require special consideration and care." No. 82. And we state that refugees should "have access to appropriate due process protections consistent with international law." No. 99. Also, we stated that "[b]ecause of their heightened vulnerability, unaccompanied minors require special consideration and care." No. 82.

When Pope Francis traveled to Lampedusa, Italy, he defended the rights of refugees and migrants and called for their protection. He decried the "globalization of indifference" and the "throwaway culture" that disregards those fleeing persecution in order to seek a better life. Pope Francis also created a Vatican department, the Dicastery to Promote Integral Human Development, to be a catalyst for Catholic collaboration in developing policies and systems to effectively address refugee and migration crises. He is personally overseeing the Migration & Refugee Section of that Dicastery as the Church seeks to improve the welcome, protection, promotion, and integration of refugees and immigrants.

² Pope Pius XII, *Exsul Familia* (On the Spiritual Care of Migrants), September, 1952.

Cubans and Haitians, unaccompanied children, survivors of torture, and victims of human trafficking.

B. The lowest PD on record also reduces the U.S. humanitarian/strategic capacity to leverage U.S. resettlement to incentivize other nations to step forward with their own humanitarian efforts. The low PD also reduces U.S. capacity to stabilize protracted or emerging refugee situations, or to show solidarity with host countries that are strategic U.S. allies.

Over recent administrations, with both Republican and Democratic presidents, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the Department of State (DOS/PRM) worked with UNHCR to expand the number of nations participating in the refugee resettlement program to 30 nations,⁷ growing the worldwide program not only in total numbers of refugees served but in countries open to welcome refugees. The U.S. and civil society partners provided mentorship and helped nurture the new programs. As these new programs are beginning to gain strength, the United States is suddenly moving in the opposite direction, drastically cutting back on resettlement. The Catholic Bishops fear that other nations will follow suit and that even more vulnerable refugees will be left behind.

The hopefully temporary reduction in U.S. leadership also comes at a time when there are several world crises which have large components of forced migration, including in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America. Reducing our leadership role in these situations potentially leaves a vacuum with not only negative humanitarian consequences but also negative strategic consequences.

In Africa, for example, the U.S. has played a key responsibility-sharing role through resettlement for the many refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as neighboring countries have hosted the vast majority of refugees. The largest African refugee resettlement population includes those fleeing from DRC, and most of them are Christians fleeing ethnic and religious persecution. Also in Africa, large famines have emerged, which in past years have been responded to through ERMA. With the U.S. reduction in leadership for FY2018, the resettlement numbers have been cut almost in half, from a regional PD in FY2017 of 35,000 to a FY2018 one of 19,000.⁸ On the famine issue, contrary to past practice of having ERMA funds available for such emergencies, the Administration is urging ERMA be zeroed out for FY2018.

In the Middle East, the Administration is slashing the regional PD from 35,555 to 17,500.⁹ This reduction in responsibility-sharing comes at a time when Lebanon is hosting over one million refugees, Turkey over 3 million, and Germany over 1 million. This leaves us deeply concerned about whether the United States is carrying its fair share for the sake of the international common good. On the humanitarian level, many Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities fleeing from Syria and Iraq will lose access to life saving resettlement. Also, we are deeply concerned about the tens of thousands of Iraqis who are in danger because they served side-by-side with our troops, and

⁷ Id., page 78.

⁸ Departments of State, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services, *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2018 Report to Congress*, September 30, 2017, page 6, available at <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4063604-Report-to-Congress-Proposed-Refugee-Admissions.html>

⁹ Id.

C. The lowest PD on record reduces the economic and social benefits that communities have come to rely on from the admission and resettlement of new refugees.

U.S. refugees include Albert Einstein (scientist), Henry Kissinger and Madeleine Albright (secretaries of state), Sergey Brin (Google co-founder), and many other famous contributors to U.S. society. We point to one recent study¹⁶ that illustrates the profound, positive economic impact of refugees collectively. Refugees:

- earn \$77.2 billion and pay taxes of \$20.9 billion, annually (in 2015);
- earn initial median household wages of \$22,000 per year, after 25 years, average earnings are \$67,000;
- earn as entrepreneurs \$4.6 billion annually, as 13% of refugees start their own businesses;
- share collective spending power of over \$1 billion in each of 18 U.S. states for a total of \$57.4 billion, including \$17.2 billion in California and \$4.6 billion in Texas; and
- provide part of the solution for future tax support to address the aging of America as 49.7% of U.S. born people are of working age, while 77.1% of refugees are of working age.

As can be seen by the results of this and other reports (see RCUSA website), refugees contribute greatly to U.S. society and local communities. Of course, there is ongoing learning by the government and the resettlement agencies about how to optimally integrate people into U.S. society, particularly when new populations of refugees are approved for resettlement.

We are deeply concerned about a discussion by some in the Administration that there should be an "assimilation test" applied to refugees to screen them out of U.S. admissions based on negative assimilation qualities. Given the diversity of American communities who have come to share common American values and aspirations, an effort to screen out people based on assimilation factors risks discriminating against people based on race, nationality, ethnicity, or religion. On the other hand, we are continually committed to working with newly arrived refugees to find the best ways to help integrate them, positioning them to be able to support themselves and their families, and to contribute to the common good in their new American communities.

D. America can resettle refugees and adjudicate asylum cases simultaneously.

We do not believe that it is necessary to reduce resettlement in order to address the asylum backlog. Resettlement, such as the soon to be dismantled Central American Minor resettlement program, is established to give refugees, in this case refugee youth, an alternative to dangerous migration. Instead of having to journey to the United States to seek asylum, they can receive resettlement and avoid the worst dangers of further persecution or being victimized by criminals or human traffickers. Providing that alternative for some of the Venezuelans who have fled to neighboring South American countries represents another example where establishing resettlement may create a safe pathway and actually reduce the number of asylum seekers coming to the United States. Congress should fund sufficient asylum officers and immigration judges to meet the ongoing demands of asylum seekers applying to our system, and sufficient refugee corps members to maintain the annual admissions number of 75,000. If the immigration fees that generally cover these adjudicators are insufficient, then Congress should appropriate additional funding to cover them.

¹⁶ *From Struggle to Resilience, New American Economy*, June 2017, p. 2, available at RCUSA website link (see footnote 4).



CWS Statement to the House Judiciary Committee, pertaining to its hearing *Oversight of the United States Refugee Admissions Program*, Thursday, October 26, 2017

As a 71-year old humanitarian organization representing 37 Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox communions and 34 refugee resettlement offices across the country, Church World Service (CWS) urges the Committee to affirm the importance of the U.S. refugee resettlement program and to oppose the administration's recent executive order to ban refugees from 11 nationalities for three months, indefinitely suspend the following to join process for refugees who have been separated from their spouse and children, and drastically increase data requirements for refugees who have been on the move, seeking safety. Taken together, these policy changes will dismantle the U.S. refugee resettlement program. The United States' position as a world leader in refugee protection hinges on our continued commitment to welcome refugees and help them rebuild their lives. Resettlement plays a strategic role in advancing U.S. foreign policy goals, and a numerous studies have found, refugees contribute positively to the U.S. economy.¹

More than 65 million people are currently displaced, including over 22 million refugees, over half of whom are children. Refugee resettlement is a longstanding, life-saving tradition that provides safety to people fleeing violence and persecution. To be considered a refugee, individuals must prove that they have fled persecution due to their nationality, ethnicity, religion, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Refugees face three durable solutions: return to their home country, integrate in the country to which they first fled, or be resettled to a third country. For the millions who are unable to return home due to significant threats to their safety and rejection by the country to which they first fled, resettlement is the last resort, and less than one percent of the world's refugees is resettled to a third country. Resettlement is critical to U.S. diplomatic efforts to encourage other countries to keep their doors open to refugees and allow refugees to work and refugee children to attend school. The strategic use of resettlement is key to the implementation of U.S. foreign policy, including our involvement in fostering regional stability in the Middle East.

As one of 37 resettlement countries,² the United States implements a public-private partnership model of refugee resettlement, with congregations, schools, employers and local communities intrinsically involved in welcoming refugees and helping them integrate and thrive. The U.S. refugee resettlement program emphasizes early self-sufficiency through employment, and most refugees are employed within their first six months of arriving to the United States.³ Many refugees are highly skilled and obtained education in their home countries. While most refugees arrive with limited resources, for every dollar spent helping refugees start a new life in the United States, there is significant economic return to communities. A report in Tennessee found that refugees contributed almost twice as much in tax revenues as they consumed in state-funded services in the past two decades.⁴ Another recent study in Columbus, Ohio, showed that from the \$6 million that the federal government and resettlement agencies spend annually to help refugees integrate, refugees contribute an annual \$1.6 billion back into the local economy, including nearly \$36 million in spending.⁵ Refugees are active members of their communities, and many start successful business ventures that fuel the U.S. economy.

As a pillar of our national foreign policy, our nation's resettlement program represents a standard of excellence that other countries around the world look to as a touchstone for their own policies. Since 1975, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) has safely and successfully resettled over three million refugees from around the world to American communities. The U.S. has the world's most thorough resettlement vetting program. Refugees are the most scrutinized traveler to the United States and face the most rigorous screening someone entering this country must undergo, spending roughly two years in exhaustive vetting processes by our nation's top security and counter-terror experts – such as the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS), Defense, State, FBI, and National Counterterrorism Center. Since 1980, the average annual goal for refugee admissions has been 95,000. It is critical that the President sets a refugee admissions goal of at least 75,000 in FY 2018. Our communities are ready to welcome them, as we have done for decades.

CWS calls on Congress to affirm the importance of refugee resettlement as a life-saving program during this current global refugee crisis, and do everything possible to voice opposition to the administration's most recent refugee ban. These efforts to dismantle the U.S. refugee resettlement program are not reflective of the welcoming communities across the country. Refugees are an asset to this country, revitalize our communities, and are powerful ambassadors of our founding principles of equal opportunity, religious freedom, and liberty and justice for all. Let us reflect the best of our nation by extending hospitality and leading by example so that other nations do the same.

¹ "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees In America," New American Economy, June 2017, http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/NAE_Refugees_V5.pdf.

² "The Economic and Social Outcomes of Refugees in the United States: Evidence from the ACS," National Bureau on Economic Research, June 2017, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w23498>.

³ "Trump Administration Rejects Study Showing Positive Impact of Refugees," The New York Times, September 18, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/18/us/politics/refugees-revenue-cost-report-trump.html?mcubz=1>.

⁴ "Frequently Asked Questions about Resettlement," UNHCR, February 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/56fa35b16>.

⁵ Randy Capps and Michael Fix, *Ten Facts About U.S. Refugee Resettlement*, Migration Policy Institute, October 2015, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/ten-facts-about-us-refugee-resettlement>.

⁶ Krista Lee, "A Study on the Federal Cost Shifting to the State of Tennessee as a Result of the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program for the Period 1990 through 2012," Nov. 12, 2013, http://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/tn_report_federalcostshifting_refugeeresettlement.pdf.

⁷ Chmura Economics & Analytics, *Economic Impact of Refugees in the Cleveland Area*, October 2013, <http://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/clevelandrefugeeeconomicimpact.pdf>.



**Statement for the Record
of David Bier of the Cato Institute*
Submitted to
Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security
House Committee on the Judiciary
Hearing on
“Oversight of the United States Refugee Admissions Program”
October 25, 2017**

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) expands the liberty of Americans to welcome people fleeing violence and persecution around the world. USRAP also stands as a repudiation of totalitarianism that has spread in recent years, vindicating the superiority of America’s system of free enterprise and individual liberty. Since its creation in 1980, USRAP has provided safety for 3.4 million refugees.¹ This experience has shown that refugees do assimilate into American society, mastering the language and finding jobs, and that they contribute economically, growing and revitalizing communities across the country.

USRAP is a more crucial component of Americans’ philanthropy today than ever. At the start of this year, war, violence, and persecution had already displaced 67.8 million people, more than at any point since the Second World War.² This worldwide crisis grows worse each day. More than 600,000 people have fled violence in Burma into Bangladesh since August 25 alone with another 400,000 on their way.³ USRAP has historically provided the most important avenue to resettle refugees permanently outside of these zones of conflict and instability.

Yet as the crisis grows, the share of displaced persons that USRAP accepted has shrunk. In 2017, USRAP accepted the lowest share of displaced in its *entire* history. The average historical share of worldwide displaced persons is more than six times higher than the share that the administration plans to admit in 2018. Americans are greater in number and possess far more resources today than in 1980 when the program launched, and with the number of free countries in the world decreasing in recent years, the United States has more reason than ever to hold its beacon high and keep its doors open to the persecuted.

The facts simply cannot support arbitrary limits on refugees at this time. Refugees do not impose significant fiscal costs in the long term, and Congress and the administration have means to reduce the short term burdens. Moreover, despite the concern that terrorists will use fraud to access the refugee program in Syria, this has not happened. In fact, vetting failures of refugees in general are very rare. Since 9/11 only two refugees have planned attacks targeting people in the United States, and no refugee has killed anyone in any such attack in USRAP’s entire history.

* The Cato Institute is a libertarian 501(c)(3) nonprofit think tank founded in 1977 and located in Washington D.C. It is dedicated to the principles of individual liberty, limited government, free markets and peace.

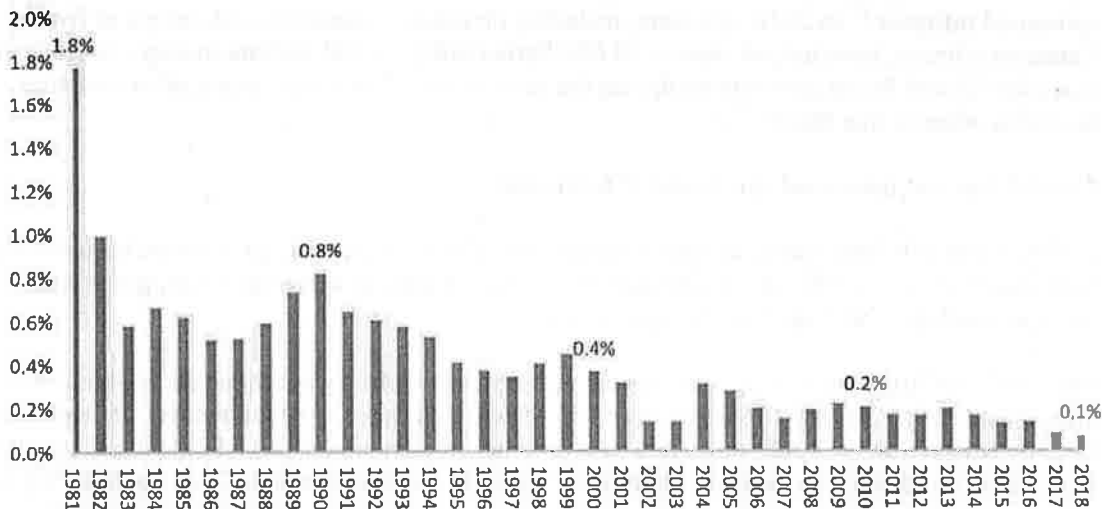
USRAP should be greatly expanded

In absolute terms, this refugee crisis is the largest since World War II.⁴ The raw numbers fail to capture fully the horrors that underlie them. The United Nations, the U.S. Department of State, and Congress have all found that the Islamic State is carrying out a “genocide” against Christians, Shia Muslims, and other religious groups in the region.⁵ Ethnic cleansing has driven more than a half a million Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar.⁶ More than 7,000 refugees have drowned in the Mediterranean alone in 2015 and 2016.⁷ In total, more than 10,000 displaced people around the world died in flight in 2016, the most on record.⁸ Doctors Without Borders has found “catastrophic malnutrition” in refugee camps.⁹

Freedom around the world is on the decline. For the last 11 years, the nonprofit Freedom House has found the number of free countries has fallen.¹⁰ But 2015 saw the worst year yet, with 72 countries seeing a decline in freedom, and 2016 was a close second with 67 countries seeing declines in freedom. The U.S. State Department has found that “many governments around the world use discriminatory laws to deny their citizens freedom of religion or belief.”¹¹

Since its conception, the primary purpose of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) has been—as the Refugee Act of 1980 put it—“to provide a permanent and systematic procedure for the admission to this country of refugees of special humanitarian concern.”¹² Thus, the need for resettlement should factor highly into the administration’s calculation of the refugee limit. Yet the administration’s 2018 refugee limit of 45,000 dramatically escalates a trend of the U.S. government toward accepting a smaller and smaller proportion of people displaced by violence and persecution around the world (Figure).

Figure
Share of U.N. High Commissioner for Refugee Population of Concern Resettled in the United States, FY 1981 to 2018



Sources: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; U.S. Department of State

As the Figure above highlights, the U.S. government has allowed Americans to accept a rapidly decreasing share of displaced persons under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee's mandate since the early 1990s.¹³ The new administration's refugee limit of 45,000 would worsen this trend, rejecting the highest share of displaced persons worldwide in the history of the modern U.S. refugee program.¹⁴ The cap would constitute a share of internationally displaced persons one-sixth of the historical average from 1981 to 2016 and a mere 4 percent of the historic high in 1981.

The new refugee limit would also be abnormal relative to the capacity of the United States, representing a major departure from its historic refugee intake. It would allow a per-capita admission rate almost half the average from 1980 to 2017, and 250 percent below the average rate under the Reagan and H.W. Bush administrations from 1981 to 1993.¹⁵ Refugee inflows already add only a tiny amount to U.S. population growth. Had all 110,000 refugees come in 2017, it would have amounted to only a 0.03 percent increase in the U.S. population. Even in absolute numbers, 45,000 is 45 percent below the historic average of 80,000 from 1980 to 2017. Given that America is more populous and wealthier than ever, it is clear that the cap is not based on America's capacity to accept refugees.

In most other immigration programs, the federal government determines the capacity and desire of Americans to accept immigrants *indirectly*. The Department of State, for example, does not attempt to calculate how many foreign spouses to admit indirectly. Instead, it admits those spouses whom Americans have chosen to sponsor and petitioned for their admission. If the administration is concerned that it cannot accurately estimate the capacity and demands of the public, it should allow U.S. residents and U.S. humanitarian organizations to petition for refugees and sponsor them directly.

Canada has successfully operated a private refugee sponsorship program since 1978, resettling more than 220,000 refugees with private sponsors during that time.¹⁶ One Canadian government report found that privately sponsored refugees had better economic outcomes than government sponsored refugees.¹⁷ In 2016, sponsors, including churches, nonprofits, and groups of five Canadian citizens, have helped resettle 18,000 Syrian refugees with private money—more than the entire United States government during the same period.¹⁸ In recent years, other countries have also adopted this model.¹⁹

USRAP has not increased the threat of terrorism

Refugees not only have posed an infinitesimally small risk of terrorism in absolute terms—they have posed a much lower risk of terrorism to Americans than all other legal immigrants and foreign travelers as well as U.S. citizens themselves.

From 1975 to 2016, the chance of an American being murdered by a refugee terrorist in the United States was 1 in 3.8 *billion* per year. This risk is 100 times less than the risk of death from all U.S.-born terrorists, 1,000 times less than all other foreign terrorists, and 255,000 times less than the risk of death from a regular homicide in the United States (see the Table below). By no measure can the data support the conclusion that refugees are a major threat to the lives of Americans.

Nor is there any reason to believe that this risk will change significantly in the future. Refugee terrorists committed all three of their murders in the 1970s—that is, before the creation of USRAP—and more than half of the 21 refugees who have even plotted or attempted an attack of any kind—include non-deadly ones—did so before 1990. Refugees have not involved themselves in any kind of plots or attacks of any scale that would have altered these estimates in any important way. At the same time, the U.S. immigration system has substantially upgraded its vetting procedures since 9/11, making the likelihood of a major terrorist infiltration even more remote today than in the past.

Table
Annual Chance of Being Killed in an Attack on U.S. Soil by Original Visa of Terrorist, 1975-2016

Category	Deaths	Annual Chance of Being Killed
All Murderers	767,717	1 in 14.6 thousand
Tourist	2,834	1 in 4.0 million
U.S.-Born	429	1 in 26.2 million
Student Visa	159	1 in 70.7 million
Fiancé Visa	14	1 in 802.6 million
Permanent Resident	8	1 in 1.4 billion
Asylee	4	1 in 2.8 billion
Refugee	3	1 in 3.8 billion
USRAP (Since 1980)	0	Zero

Sources: Alex Nowrasteh, "Terrorism and Immigration: A Risk Analysis," *Cato Institute: Policy Analysis No. 798, September 13, 2016*; David Bier, *International Refugee Assistance Project v. Trump*, *Cato Institute, September 19, 2017, p. 27*.

The risk of terrorists committing fraud to access the refugee program is also incredibly small. Only two refugees admitted since 9/11—Uzbek national Fazliddin Kurbanov and Somali national Abdul Artan—have plotted or carried out a terrorist attack in the United States.²⁰ Neither killed anyone. While it is possible that they committed fraud to obtain refugee status, the government never presented any evidence that they did.[†] It is impossible to view these numbers and consider refugee fraud a major threat to Americans.

USRAP positively impacts the U.S. economy

The administration has reduced the refugee limit to 45,000 for fiscal year 2018. The limit was 85,000 in FY 2016. Limitations on the entry of refugees are essentially a type of labor market regulation. Refugees, like all other immigrants, contribute to the economy through entrepreneurship, employment, and consumption—all of which benefit U.S. residents. Studies on refugees in the United States and other countries have found that refugees can create wage gains

[†] Even if we expand our view to refugees convicted of supporting terrorist groups abroad, we find just four other refugees admitted since 9/11 who radicalized prior to entry.

for native workers through their consumption or through skill complementarities.²¹ They can also lower prices overall by decreasing the cost of production and creating a new pool of consumers without brand loyalties for which businesses must compete.²²

The Cato Institute has used a conservative estimate of immigrants' positive economic contributions to project that U.S.-born citizens benefit to the tune of at least \$476 in wages per refugee.²³ Over the next decade, that would equal at least \$326 million in economic costs directly to U.S.-born citizens specifically, assuming that the cap had continued to average 110,000, President Obama's proposed refugee limit for 2017.

The National Academy of Sciences 2016 report on the fiscal and economic effects of immigration found that immigrants on average are fiscally positive.²⁴ One recent study found that despite higher than average upfront costs, refugees "pay \$21,000 more in taxes than they receive in benefits over their first 20 years in the U.S."²⁵ A draft report on the cost of resettlement from 2005 to 2014 sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services found that "the net fiscal impact of refugees was positive over the 10-year period, at \$63 billion."²⁶ The administration declined to publish the report due its positive findings.²⁷

The appropriate response to the short-term fiscal costs of resettlement is to find ways to reduce them by promoting economic integration and finding ways to cost-share with the private sector. Canada's successful private refugee sponsorship system allows private parties, churches, and nonprofits to sponsor refugees with private money, removing some of the fiscal burden from the government.²⁸

¹ United States Department of State, "Admissions and Arrivals," Refugee Processing Center, <http://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>.

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Population Statistics Database," 2017, http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview#_ga=2.114193607.1310969598.1508960236-1864847568.1508960236.

³ International Organization for Migration, "ISCG Situation Update: Rohingya Refugee Crisis, Cox's Bazar," October 24, 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/iscg-situation-update-rohingya-refugee-crisis-cox-s-bazar-24-oct-2017>.

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⁴ Euan McKirdy, "UNHCR report: More displaced now than after WWII," CNN, June 20, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/20/world/unhcr-displaced-peoples-report/index.html>.

⁵ Nahal Toosi, "House unanimously condemns ISIL for genocide," Politico, March 14, 2016, <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/03/congress-genocide-220736>.

Greg Myre, "John Kerry: ISIS Is Carrying Out 'Genocide'," NPR, March 17, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/03/17/470801112/john-kerry-isis-is-carrying-out-genocide>.

"UN human rights panel concludes ISIL is committing genocide against Yazidis," United Nations, www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=54247#.WUAKaOvyuUl

⁶ Matthew Pennington, "U.S. declaration of 'ethnic cleansing' in Myanmar on way," Associated Press, October 24, 2017, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-ethnic-cleansing-myanmar-20171024-story.html>.

- ⁷ UNHCR Staff, "Mediterranean death toll soars, 2016 is deadliest year yet," October 25, 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/latest/2016/10/580f3e684/mediterranean-death-toll-soars-2016-deadliest-year.html>.
- ⁸ Mark Townsend and Tracy McVeigh, "Migrant death toll expected to exceed 10,000 in 2016," *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/17/migrant-death-toll-2016-syria-united-nations>.
- ⁹ "Catastrophic malnutrition in refugee camps," Doctors Without Borders, <http://www.msf.ca/en/article/catastrophic-malnutrition-refugee-camps>.
- ¹⁰ Freedom House, "Populists and Autocrats: The Dual Threat to Global Democracy," 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2017>.
- ¹¹ Rex Tillerson, "Remarks on the 2016 International Religious Freedom Annual Report," U.S. Department of State, August 15, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2017/08/273449.htm>
- ¹² 8 U.S. Code § 1521, note. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/8/1521>
- ¹³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "The Global Appeal and Supplementary Appeals," <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/the-global-appeal-and-supplementary-appeals.html>.
United States Department of State, "Admissions and Arrivals," Refugee Processing Center, <http://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>.
- ¹⁴ Joel Rose, "Trump Administration To Drop Refugee Cap To 45,000, Lowest In Years," NPR, September 27, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/2017/09/27/554046980/trump-administration-to-drop-refugee-cap-to-45-000-lowest-in-years>.
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²⁸ Government of Canada, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program," <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/>.

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH

The Episcopal Church Statement to the House Judiciary Committee, pertaining to its hearing
Oversight of the United States Refugee Admissions Program

Thursday, October 26, 2017

The Episcopal Church wishes to express its strong support for the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) as a vital humanitarian program. In establishing the USRAP in the Refugee Act of 1980, Congress declared, “that it is the historic policy of the United States to respond to the urgent needs of persons subject to persecution in their homelands” through offering humanitarian assistance overseas, opportunities for resettlement, and for transitional assistance to refugees in the U.S.¹ Under this clear directive, the U.S. has become a global leader in responding to dire human need due to displacement crises.

As there are currently 22.5 million refugees² living in vulnerable situations around the world, it is imperative the U.S. continue its leadership to offer safe and dignified solutions for these individuals. Resettlement is a solution available to refugees who will not be able to return home in the near future or be able to stay safely in the country into which they fled. While resettlement is available to a small number of refugees, it is a lifesaving option. The Episcopal Church, through its resettlement agency Episcopal Migration Ministries, has proudly partnered with the federal government for decades to ensure resettled refugees achieve safety and success through the USRAP.

After refugees undergo extensive screening and are approved for resettlement, the USRAP leverages tools and resources from both local communities and the federal government to welcome refugees. Faith communities in particular are strong historic partners in the work of resettlement. The Episcopal Church’s Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry affirms this, saying, “refugee resettlement is a form of ministry, and one that we, and many other churches and faith-based organizations, cherish.”³

Indeed, the USRAP is cherished by millions who have received safety and opportunity through the program and by U.S. communities that have been enriched by new refugee neighbors. The Episcopal Church is committed to seeking and serving Christ in all persons and loving our neighbor as ourselves. This fundamental component of our faith guides us to support the USRAP as an offering of freedom and hope.

¹ Refugee Act of 1980 <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-94/pdf/STATUTE-94-Pg102.pdf>

² UNHCR Global Trends Report <http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2016/>

³ Presiding Bishop on refugee resettlement <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/cns/2017/01/25/presiding-bishop-i-ask-president-trump-to-continue-the-powerful-work-of-our-refugee-resettlement-program-without-interruption/>

October 25, 2017

Acting Secretary Eric Hagan
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Director Scott Lloyd
Office of Refugee Resettlement
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
330 C St SW
Washington D.C. 20201

Acting Secretary Eric Hagan and Director Scott Lloyd:

As organizations committed to protecting the health and dignity of all people, including youth, immigrants, refugees, and their families, we write to express our grave concerns about the Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR's) mistreatment of and abuse of power over 17-year-old Jane Doe and other young people in your custody. Jane, a young woman from Central America in ORR's care, was denied access to an abortion and forced to continue a pregnancy against her will for one month, despite having independently secured the necessary resources and legal authorization. ORR's treatment of Jane was not only shocking in its disregard of her autonomy and dignity – it was also against the law. While Jane was finally able to access the care she needed by going to court, many other young people being held in ORR's custody may also be denied the ability to get abortion care and coerced and shamed for their decisions. We demand the immediate suspension of any existing ORR policies and practices that restricted prompt access to the full range of reproductive health care for Jane and continue to restrict the rights of thousands of other individuals within ORR custody.

There is no need more fundamental than the need for access to safe, quality health care and information. No person in the custody of the federal government, including those residing in facilities operated by ORR, should be denied this basic dignity. Unaccompanied immigrant youth from Central America frequently face unthinkable hardships before coming into the care of ORR, making prompt medical attention necessary.¹ Many of them leave their home countries in order to flee violence or abuse. And, in their journeys to the U.S. border, many experience more violence in the form of sexual assault, sex trafficking, or other trauma. In fact, human rights advocates estimate that the rate of women and girls raped on their journey to the United States is between 60 percent and 80 percent.² The prevalence of such experiences makes the

¹ United Nations Human Rights Council, *Women on the Run: First-Hand Accounts of Refugees Fleeing El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico*, (2015), available at <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/operations/5630f24c6/women-run.html>.

² Schmidt, Leigh and Buechler, Stephanie Prof. (2016) "I risk everything because I have already lost everything." Central American female migrants speak out on the migrant trail in Oaxaca, Mexico." *Journal*

Accordingly, the undersigned 104 organizations demand that ORR immediately restore access to reproductive health care services and information, including abortion, for Jane and the thousands of other young people in ORR's custody. Jane, alongside every person like her, has a right to make decisions about her health and her future with dignity and self-determination. ORR is bound by law to respect this right.

Sincerely,

Abortion Care Network
Access Reproductive Care-Southeast (ARC-Southeast)
Advocates for Youth
African American Ministers In Action
All-Options
American Civil Liberties Union
American GI Forum of the US
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Boulder Valley Women's Health Center
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
California Women's Law Center
Cambridge Reproductive Health Consultants
Casa de Esperanza
Catholics for Choice
Center for American Progress
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice at UC Berkeley
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
Desiree Alliance
EMILY's List
Feminist Majority Foundation
FORGE, Inc.
Forward Together
Fund Texas Choice
GLAAD
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
Healthy and Free Tennessee
HIAS
Hispanic Federation
Human Rights Campaign
Ibis Reproductive Health
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
PRSH Section, American Public Health Association
Public Leadership Institute
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Religious Institute
Secular Coalition for America
SEIU 32BJ
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States
SIA Legal Team
SisterSong: National Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
Southwest Women's Law Center
Transgender Law Center
UltraViolet
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
United We Dream
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Voto Latino
We Belong Together
Western State Center
Women for Women
Women's Refugee Commission
WV FREE

24 National and State-Based Religious Groups Oppose ORR Obstructive Policy on Abortion

October 26, 2017

House Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security
United States House of Representatives
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Labrador, Ranking Member Lofgren and Subcommittee Members,

As you fulfill your oversight role over the US governmental agencies which administer immigration policy and work with refugee populations, we, the undersigned national and state faith-based organizations and religious groups, urge you to oppose all efforts to restrict women's access to safe, legal abortion, regardless of immigration status. No person's ability to exercise their freedom of conscience should be circumscribed simply because they lack legal documentation or enter the United States through refugee programs. We stand united across our faith traditions in opposing the actions of the US Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Director Scott Lloyd in imposing his personal beliefs on vulnerable women coming to this country to seek better lives for themselves. We abhor all attempts to interfere with the conscience-based medical decisions of any individual and demand that our government work to ensure that its administrators and policies reflect this deeply held American commitment to autonomy, justice and dignity.

The treatment of the young woman known as Jane Doe in Texas at the hands of the ORR and Director Lloyd has come under close scrutiny in recent weeks. We are appalled by the callous disregard for this young woman's religious liberty and her constitutional right to exercise bodily autonomy. ORR's conduct in this case exemplifies the anti-women policies of the department and the administration overall by blocking access to safe healthcare. The decision to end a pregnancy must be left to an individual woman in consultation with her family, doctors and any others she chooses to involve, in keeping with her personal faith beliefs. Instead, agents of the federal government took Ms. Doe's vulnerable circumstances as an opportunity to push an ideological agenda at the expense of her individual liberty.

The religious values that guide our organizations call us to demonstrate compassion for any woman or family facing difficult circumstances related to pregnancy. As a woman makes this decision for herself and her family, we believe that it is neither our role—nor the government's—to stand in judgment. Our religious values call us to offer compassion, support and respect for a woman and her family facing such a decision. Each woman is a moral agent who deserves dignity and respect. It is critical that no woman loses her ability to follow her beliefs and pursue the healthcare she needs because of her immigration status. It is incumbent upon our lawmakers to ensure that every person has safe and legal access to the medical care she feels is necessary and best in her situation.

It deeply disturbs us to see this administration and its agents use individuals like Jane Doe as pawns in a game of political chess. ORR's attempts to restrict abortion access for those in its custody represents a continuation of the appalling injustices towards vulnerable women, youth, people of color and immigrants that has exemplified this administration's policies from day one. The lives and dignity of immigrant women should never be forsaken to score political points. Their autonomy should be a foremost concern for our policymakers as well as those charged with their care.

When a woman is denied an abortion, the consequences on her life and her family can be far-reaching, impacting health, economic security and well-being. As communities of faith, we believe access to quality healthcare to be a human right, no matter one's immigration status. Women should not lose that right when they cross a border or enter into refugee programs. Any US immigration or refugee policy that does not include access to abortion does not completely serve the economic, medical or emotional needs of women or our society as a whole.

Our religious values compel us to advocate for policies that empower the most marginalized in our communities. When restrictions to abortion are enacted, those most negatively affected are women without the financial resources to access safe care elsewhere. Newly arrived immigrants to this country, especially those who are undocumented, face incredible challenges. Respect for their human dignity should include preserving the ability to make the decisions that will best position them to fulfill their basic needs and pursue their dreams. We stand with women who find themselves facing hardships and therefore oppose policies or actions that will disproportionately and unjustly compound the difficulties of families in our communities that are already struggling to make ends meet.

Naturally, people in this country have differing religious views on issues of pregnancy and parenting, including on abortion. Freedom of belief is a core principle of our American democracy. We cause great harm when we deny immigrants the ability to pursue the conscience-based decisions, no matter their faith. We demand better from our nation and its policymakers. We urge as overseers to ORR, that you work to ensure individual's rights and freedom of conscience are respected and that dignity and autonomy not be made to act as the price of admission.

In faith,

Anti-Defamation League	Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network
Call To Action	National Council of Jewish Women
Catholics for Choice	Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Chicago Women-Church	Pennsylvania Religious Coalition for Reproductive Justice
Concerned Clergy for Choice	Presbyterian Feminist Agenda Network
Episcopal Women's Caucus	Presbyterians Affirming Reproductive Options
Florida Interfaith Coalition for Reproductive Health	Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Global Justice Institute (MCC)	Religious Institute
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.	Society for Humanistic Judaism
Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice	Unitarian Universalist Association
Methodist Federation for Social Action	Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
Metropolitan Community Churches	Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)

For more information please contact Sara Hutchinson Ratcliffe, Catholics for Choice, at shratcliffe@catholicsforchoice.org or (202)986-6093