

## Federal Judge Halts Policy That Would Allow Gov. Greg Abbott to Ban Refugees From Texas

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A federal judge has temporarily blocked a Trump administration policy that would have let Gov. Greg Abbott stop refugees from settling in the Lone Star State.

Judge Peter J. Messitte handed down the decision Wednesday, days after Abbott become the [first and only governor](#) under Trump's executive order to say he wouldn't allow refugees to be placed in his state. Abbott has [faced harsh criticism](#) for the decision. At least 42 other governors — including fellow Republicans — have said they would accept refugees.

Messitte, who presides over a U.S. District Court in Maryland, ruled that the administration's rule, which allows governors and local officials to decline to participate in refugee resettlement, is "unlawful." He also warned that it would allow officials to make arbitrary decisions that are "inherently susceptible to hidden bias."

"By giving States and Local governments the power to veto where refugees maybe settled — in the face of clear statutory text and structure, purpose, Congressional intent, executive practice, judicial holdings, and Constitutional doctrine to the contrary — [the order] does not appear to serve the overall public interest," Messitte said in his [31-page decision](#).

Texas has been one of the top states for resettlement, [according to the Texas Tribune](#). The number of refugees coming here hit a high of about 8,212 people in 2009, the *Tribune* reported, citing State Department data.

Wednesday's ruling came in response to a suit filed by three refugee resettlement agencies that work with the State Department to help people who flee their home countries to escape war and persecution.