

House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security
Hearing on "Oversight of the United States Refugee Admissions Program."

October 26, 2017

HHS Witness: Scott Lloyd

Questions for the Record from Representative Zoe Lofgren (CA-19)

HHS Report on the Economic Contributions of Refugees

An HHS draft report (as found at the web address listed in the below footnote) provided to the media concluded that refugees made a net-positive contribution of \$63 billion to the United States over a ten-year period. Accounts indicate that the final version of that report omitted any evidence of refugees' economic contributions, instead focusing exclusively on costs associated with refugees.

Question 1: Please provide:

- a. All drafts of the report, including the final version reportedly completed in September 2017.
- b. All communications referring or relating to any draft of this report, its contents, or its findings, including but not limited to communications between or among any federal officials, including officials at DOS, HHS, the White House, or any other federal agency, as well as communications between or among non-governmental entities or individuals.

Response: On March 6, 2017, the President issued a memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of Homeland Security. Part of this memorandum instructed the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to submit a report estimating the long-term costs of the United States Refugee Admissions Program at the Federal, State, and local levels, along with recommendations about how to curtail those costs. The report has not been finalized.

Question 2: Please identify:

- a. The findings in early versions of the report that were omitted in later versions.
- b. The criteria guiding those omissions.
- c. The offices and officials involved in producing the report, including any officials at DOS, HHS, the White House, or any other federal agency, as well as any political staff that participated in any way in this process.
- d. The methodology underlying the report.
- e. The specific rationale for excluding from the final report the economic benefits of refugees.

Response: On March 6, 2017, the President issued a memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of Homeland Security. Part of this memorandum instructed the Secretary of State, in consultation with HHS, to submit a report estimating the long-term costs of the United States Refugee Admissions Program at the Federal, State, and local levels, along with recommendations about how to curtail those costs. The report has not been finalized.

Question 3: Does the Administration believe that it is important to consider not only any costs associated with refugees, but also any benefits associated with them?

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Assimilation

The Administration's report to Congress concerning the proposed FY 2018 refugee admissions ceiling states: "PRM and DHS/USCIS will work closely with UNHCR to ensure that, in addition to referrals of refugees with compelling protection needs, referrals may also take into account certain criteria that enhance a refugee's likelihood of successful assimilation and contribution to the United States."

Question 1: Is it the Administration's position that refugees are not already successfully assimilating into and contributing to the United States?

Response: Successful assimilation of refugees into communities directly benefits refugees and communities, while also serving the national interest of the United States. HHS believes that we can do more to improve upon existing programs. For example, the HHS Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) will combine existing social service and targeted assistance funding to allow States and providers more flexibility to address specific needs.

Question 2: Please provide the empirical evidence underlying and methodology guiding the above "assimilation test," including any evidence that you believe demonstrates an existing failure to assimilate.

Response: ORR does not have a role in the refugee admissions and referral process. We would refer you to the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State.

Question 3: What criteria has the Administration identified as predicting a refugee's likelihood of successfully assimilating into and contributing to the United States, or failing to do so?

Response: ORR does not have a role in the refugee admissions and referral process. We would refer you to the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State.

Question 4: Under what circumstances, and to what extent, will this test determine the composition of U.S. refugee referrals and admissions?

Response: ORR does not have a role in the refugee admissions and referral process. We would refer you to the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State.