

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write as concerned Members of Congress who support the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and the life-saving assistance that resettlement agencies provide to the most vulnerable populations. March 17, 2025, marked the 45th anniversary of the Refugee Act of 1980 – groundbreaking bipartisan legislation that enshrined into law America’s commitment to welcoming and protecting refugees fleeing persecution. We commemorate our nation’s historic global leadership and commitment to providing relief and opportunity to people forced from their homes for religious, ethnic, racial, political, or other reasons. That is why we decry the ongoing dismantling of refugee resettlement that is currently underway.

Beginning in the first week of President Trump’s second term, an indefinite refugee ban and funding freeze abandoned tens of thousands of refugees in dangerous situations overseas and barred newly-resettled refugees from essential core services. Among the first flights canceled on the morning of January 22, 2025, was a group of four Afghan refugee minors, the youngest just seven years old, who were set to reunite with their parents in Massachusetts the following day. The implementation of an indefinite refugee ban made clear that this administration is at odds with our country’s welcoming spirit; its decision to terminate cooperative agreements with resettlement agencies to resettle refugees confirms its intention to eviscerate the USRAP as we know it.

Despite the USRAP’s immense success over the last 45 years, this administration has decimated our ability to welcome refugees in just two months. As of April 15, 2025, more than 22,000 refugees who were listed as “Ready for Departure” to the United States after extensive security and medical vetting have been left stranded without a pathway forward. Over 221,000 refugees have been left in limbo in the refugee resettlement pipeline. Case management systems have

been shut down. Resettlement agencies, owed millions of dollars from this administration for their vital services, have been forced to close, furlough, and/or lay off staff, leaving refugees who recently arrived at risk of homelessness.


As lawmakers whose states and districts are made better for its diversity and inclusion, we know that having a robust refugee resettlement program makes America stronger, safer, and more prosperous. Refugees are net contributors to the U.S. economy, and their ability to find safety here advances stability around the world and community vitalization at home. A recent U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) study shows that refugees and asylees contributed \$124 billion in positive fiscal impact in the United States over a 15-year period. The majority of Americans support refugee resettlement and want to welcome new neighbors who can fill labor shortages in critical industries and raise their children alongside theirs. The USRAP is globally celebrated for its efficiency in helping refugees achieve self-sufficiency and integrate into their new communities.

Several of the ten resettlement agencies were born in the wake of the devastation of World War II and sought to welcome those fleeing Nazi Germany. The Refugee Act of 1980 formalized our country's ability to help people in need of safe harbor rebuild their lives. Through its executive order indefinitely suspending the USRAP and its subsequent actions restricting humanitarian pathways, this administration is turning its back on the world's most vulnerable. We call on the administration to immediately and fully restore refugee resettlement through the following steps:

- Ensure all refugees whose flights were canceled on January 20 are rebooked for travel;
- Reimplement cooperative agreements with the agencies that have been providing life-saving reception services for decades; and
- Reimburse millions in frozen funds for core reception services to refugees who have already resettled in communities across the country.

We appreciate your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



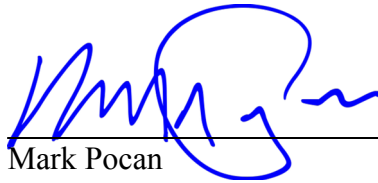
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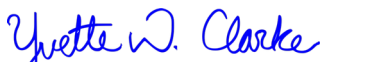
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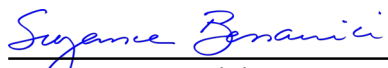
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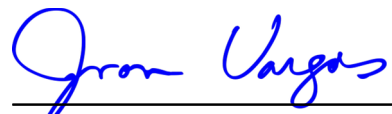
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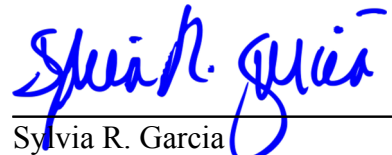
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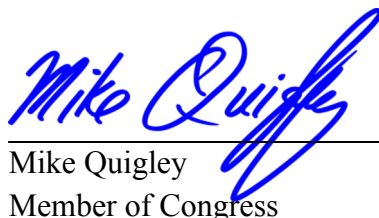
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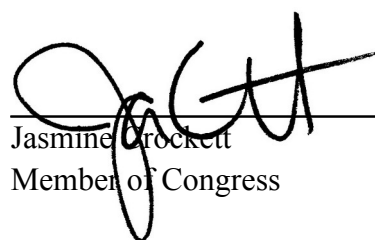
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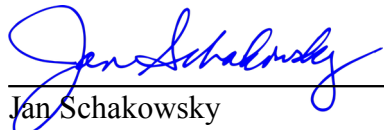
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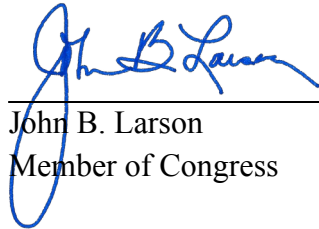
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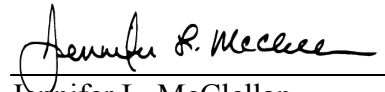
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CC: DHS Secretary Kristi Noem

HHS Secretary Robert Kennedy, Jr.