

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Secretary Marco Rubio
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Secretary Kristi Noem
United States Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Rubio and Secretary Noem:

We write to strongly object to the dismantling of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), including the funding freeze that has halted refugee processing and resettlement, pursuant to Executive Order 14013 (the “EO”), titled “Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program.”

On February 25, 2025, a federal court in Washington granted a nationwide preliminary injunction to restart refugee processing. However, just 24 hours later, plaintiff organizations, along with all other resettlement agencies, received termination notices from the State Department, effective immediately, in an apparent attempt to circumvent the court’s order. In the meantime, on March 25, 2025, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled to allow the funding freeze to stay in effect. While that ruling requires the Administration to continue resettlement for the thousands of individuals conditionally approved for refugee status before January 20, 2025, it seems clear that this Administration’s indefinite refugee ban and funding freeze for refugee reception programs are intended to completely end this incredibly successful program.

For example, we have received reports that all ten refugee agencies - and several Resettlement Support Centers (RSCs) overseas - have received termination notices for the cooperative agreements that allow them to resettle refugees. As a result, RSC staff overseas have been laid off *en masse*, and payment and case management systems have been shut down. Resettlement sites in most of the states we represent are being forced to close, abruptly cutting off support for refugees who have arrived in the last 90 days.

The Administration also stopped payments to refugee agencies for services already rendered. After a preliminary injunction requiring payment, the Administration notified plaintiffs that it had directed the appropriate agencies to release payments, but there is still no evidence that these payments have been fully released. The Administration also notified plaintiffs and the

International Organization for Migration operating RSCs overseas that they can resume refugee processing. Without reimbursements or access to necessary case processing systems, however, this notification has had little effect.

These actions undermine America's longstanding commitment to humanitarian protection and place tens of thousands of vulnerable individuals—many of whom served alongside U.S. armed forces—at grave risk. One of the most alarming consequences of the Administration's funding and resettlement freeze is the situation facing Afghan allies who were evacuated to third countries with the promise of eventual resettlement in the United States. Many of these Afghans are former interpreters, civil society leaders, and their families, who now find themselves stranded without legal status and facing harassment, violence, and deportation. We are already seeing the fatal consequences of USRAP's demise: on February 2, an Afghan man who had worked for the U.S. military in Afghanistan and whose scheduled resettlement to Garden Grove, California was delayed by the refugee ban and funding freeze was murdered.

As you know, the USRAP was established on a bipartisan basis by the *Refugee Act of 1980* and is a strong public-private partnership that drives U.S. economic growth, advances global stability and peace, and supports our national security and diplomatic priorities. The USRAP represents the best of American values and is part of what makes our country great. From 2005 to 2019, refugees contributed to the U.S. economy \$123.8 billion more than they received in government expenditures. Refugees, including multiple former Secretaries of State, have shaped and improved our nation.

We ask that you restart this life-saving program and immediately confirm that the Department of State is expeditiously complying with federal court orders to resume refugee resettlement and reimburse resettlement agencies for critical reception and integration services.

We also ask that you respond to the following questions by April 10, 2025:

1. How many refugees who have been vetted and approved for travel have been unable to travel to the United States since the ban went into effect?
2. What steps are being taken to protect prospective refugees and SIV holders with particular vulnerabilities who remain overseas?
3. What steps have been taken to implement the case-by-case exemption process for refugees whose arrival is "in the national interest" that is described in Executive Order 14163?
4. What is the current status of Reception and Placement (R&P) reimbursements to domestic resettlement agencies?

5. What is the current status of cooperative agreements with resettlement agencies? What is the justification for sending termination notices for reception and placement services?

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



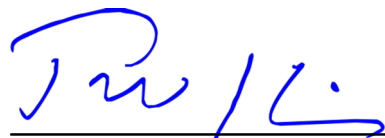
Peter Welch
United States Senator



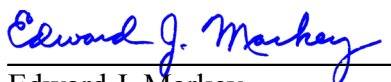
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



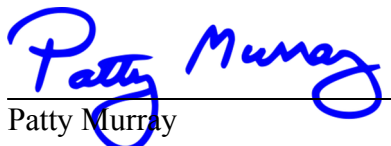
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United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



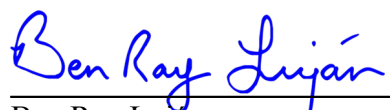
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Cory A. Booker
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United States Senator




Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
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Mazie K. Hirono
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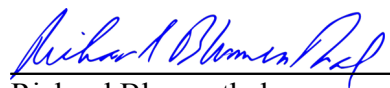
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



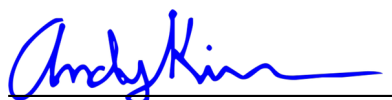
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator