



Facts vs. Fear: A Response to the Administration's Misleading Claims about Refugee Resettlement

Administration Claim: "We need to divert resources from the refugee program to address the asylum backlog at our border."

Reality: There is no need to divert resources from one vulnerable population to help another.

- The asylum and refugee programs have [successfully operated concurrently for decades](#). There are currently 215,000 refugees in the pipeline awaiting DHS interviews - and we cannot neglect those vulnerable refugees.
- Funds to fully staff both the Refugee Corps and Asylum Division (separate offices under U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) are *already allocated*, as they are fee-funded from immigration applications. There is no reason to rob Peter to pay Paul.
- The current asylum backlog is not a result of a lack in asylum officers - but rather a slow judicial process that prevents asylum seekers from being heard and cases processed in immigration courts in a timely manner.
- The Refugee Corps is staffed by 155 officers compared to the Asylum Division which is staffed by approximately 600 officers, indicating a 2.5:1 ratio of asylum officers to refugee officers. Currently, 100 out of 155 refugee officers have been re-allocated to work on asylum cases, and 20 officers are not currently active and in the field, leaving only 30 refugee officers.
- Pulling away refugee officers has an extremely harmful effect on refugees - given that it limits DHS' capacity to schedule and conduct interviews. Right now, the administration is only set to conduct 27,000 overseas refugee interviews this fiscal year, only around quarter of the number of interviews conducted in FY16.

Administration Claim: "The PD for FY18 was 45,000, but we're only on track to resettle 20,000. Why bother setting the PD higher than the amount of refugees we can take?"

Facts: The low number of refugees admitted this year was caused by the administration's anti-refugee policies and does not reflect processing capacity.

- This record low number is a result of the [executive orders](#) that have slowed down the process for background checks, halted the program multiple times, and make it impossible for approved refugees to travel.
- Congress has already allocated funding, and DHS has already approved enough individuals to resettle [75,000 refugees](#) by the end of this year. The capacity exists to resettle even more refugees if the administration would stop damaging the program (there are currently 265,000 refugees in the resettlement pipeline, 215,000 of which are awaiting to be interviewed by DHS).



Administration Claim: “Resettling refugees from conflict-ridden countries poses a security threat to the United States.”

Reality: The most difficult way to enter the United States is as a refugee, as each individual seeking protection must undergo an [exhaustive screening process](#) to enter the United States.

- Refugees go through rigorous vetting and background checks: The U.S. government thoroughly screens refugees’ backgrounds— an intensive process conducted entirely while the refugee is living abroad – involving the Departments of Homeland Security and State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and national intelligence agencies. U.S. background checks are can take up to two years to be conducted. [Refugees will not be admitted to the United States until after they have passed all security screenings.](#)
- In [October 2017](#), the Trump administration implemented broad new security procedures, including more extensive background checks and an extra 90-day review of vetting procedures for refugees from 11 countries.
- Of the more than 3 million refugees admitted to the U.S. since 1980, [not a single refugee has committed a lethal terrorist attack on U.S. soil](#). Multiple [studies](#) have [shown](#) the refugees poses [no threat](#) to national security.
- [Refugees do not choose where they are resettled](#). The United Nations Refugee Agency, UNHCR, refers refugees to one of 26 countries that participate in refugee resettlement. Those countries then have refugees go through their own security mechanisms, with the United States having the most intensive screening process in the world.
- [Refugee resettlement and national security are complementary](#). UNHCR has highlighted that processing methods such as biometric registration and background screenings enhance states’ security while also protecting the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.
- In 2002, the year after 9/11, the [Presidential Determination](#) was set at 70,000 and 27,131 refugees were resettled, then the lowest in the history of the program until now. The Bush administration made clear that refugee resettlement was important both morally and in terms of foreign policy, and must be preserved.

Administration Claim: “We should help refugees overseas rather than at home”

Reality: Resettling refugees is one of our strongest diplomatic tools to advance our foreign policy and national security objectives.

- Resettlement helps our allies, including Jordan, Kenya, and Egypt, that are struggling to host hundreds of thousands of refugees.
- Resettlement honors the U.S. commitment to protect Iraqis and Afghans whose lives remain in danger due to their work for the U.S. military.
- Resettlement is one of the only durable solutions available for the 44,400 people who are forcibly displaced every day. Globally, the forcibly displaced population increased in 2017 by 2.9 million. By the end of the year, [68.5 million](#) individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, or generalized violence. The vast majority of these refugees are never able to return home.
- Resettlement is a *last resort* for those who cannot return home or rebuild their lives in the first country to which they flee. This unfortunately is the case for hundreds of thousands of individuals.
- Currently, [less than one percent](#) of the world’s refugees are ultimately resettled to third countries, and only a percentage of that number come to the U.S.



Administration Claim: "Refugees are a drain on our economy"

Reality: Refugees boost the economy, pay taxes, and fuel job growth.

- [Studies](#) have shown that most refugees quickly become self-sufficient. Refugees pay an average \$21,000 more in taxes than they receive in benefits.
- Refugees fuel job growth. [Forty percent](#) of all Fortune 500 companies were founded by refugees, immigrants or their children. Immigrants tend to have higher rates of entrepreneurial activity than other segments of the population, and to invest in businesses that offer everyday goods and services, a critical component of a strong economy.
- A [report](#) by the Department of Health and Human Services released in July of 2017 shows that refugees have brought in [a net \\$63 billion](#) in revenue over the past decade.
- In 2015, 13% of refugees (181,463 people) were entrepreneurs, generating \$4.6 billion in total business [income](#).
- According to the [Washington Post](#), after six-years in the United States, refugees work at higher rates than their U.S.-born counterparts.
- A [study in Cleveland, Ohio](#) found that refugee resettlement effectively generates \$48 million in annual economic activity, supports 650 jobs in a single county alone, and generates nearly \$2.8 million in taxes to the state and local authorities.
- A study in [Columbus, Ohio](#) found that the contributions of refugees in one county alone to the economy is estimated to be \$1.6 billion each year and the local refugee community supports an estimated total of 21,273 jobs in the Columbus area.
- A [study in Lancaster, Pennsylvania](#) found that in 2014, foreign-born residents, including refugees and immigrants, contributed \$1.3 billion to the GDP of Lancaster County, \$52.5 million in state and local taxes, and held \$440.5 million in spending power. That same year, immigrants in the area contributed more than \$62.8 million to Social Security and almost \$16.4 million to Medicare.