

The Honorable Senator Mikulski
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Representative Rogers
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Senator Shelby
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Representative Lowey
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20

January 6th, 2014

Dear Senator Mikulski, Senator Shelby, Representative Rogers, and Representative Lowey,

We, the undersigned humanitarian, human rights, faith-based, and refugee-serving organizations and leaders, write to ask you for your leadership to ensure robust funding for the Labor, Health, and Human Services FY14 bill. Specifically, we would like to call your attention to funding for the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program through the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). A lack of additional funding this year for ORR would compromise America's ability to provide vital services and protection for the vulnerable people we welcome into our communities.

The U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program offers refugees safe haven and a chance at a new life, while also bringing tangible benefits for the communities that welcome them. Having endured incredible hardship and unimaginable horrors in their home countries, refugees often spend years exiled in host countries once they flee, awaiting the opportunity to rebuild their lives. Once they are resettled, refugees become engaged and productive community members, contributing economically, socially, and spiritually to our communities.

In addition to refugees, ORR is mandated to care for a growing number of children who arrive to the United States vulnerable and alone, fleeing violence in Central America and around the world. Due to an unprecedented rise in arrivals of unaccompanied immigrant children, ORR's budget needs have quickly and drastically changed. Additional funds must be appropriated for FY 2014 to adequately serve all of the vulnerable migrants under the purview of ORR—refugees, asylees, victims of human trafficking and torture, Cuban-Haitian entrants, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa holders, unaccompanied alien children (UACs), and unaccompanied refugee children (URM). If ORR is not able to secure more funding, the road to self-sufficiency and integration could be hampered for thousands of people and the assistance that welcoming states, counties, and cities rely on would be at risk.

The federal funds allocated to states for services to refugees and other vulnerable populations play a vital role in ensuring that aspiring new Americans are able to thrive and achieve self-sufficiency, with minimal impact on state and local resources. With these resources invested in a refugee's first few months, 85% of refugee families are self-sufficient within 180 days after arrival. Without this initial investment in their integration, however, these newcomers could struggle to obtain a job, learn English, and maintain housing, and the United States would jeopardize our standing as a leader in refugee resettlement and protection. Offering sanctuary to victims of war and persecution is at the heart of this nation's history and is also a noble tradition proudly shared by our states. One of the greatest strengths of the resettlement program is community support and engagement, as demonstrated in the public-private partnership between the U.S. Government and refugee resettlement agencies. Across the country, state agencies, places of worship, local community groups, and dedicated citizens continuously work together to foster sustainable partnerships and welcoming communities for refugees.

We fear that without additional funding, ORR will have no choice but to restrict services or cut funding from programs supporting refugees, Cuban-Haitian entrants, and victims of torture and human trafficking, hampering the road to self-sufficiency and integration. In addition, the funding that ORR provides to states, counties, and cities that welcome these populations would also be at risk. We ask that you keep these newest members of our communities and our humanitarian commitments in mind, as you and your colleagues ensure that the FY14 Labor, Health, and Human Services appropriations bill can provide sufficient funding for the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to continuing our dialogue on the important role of refugee services and the need for robust funding for these lifesaving domestic programs in 2014, 2015, and beyond.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Agudath Israel of America
 American Jewish Committee
 B'nai B'rith International
 Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)
 Church World Service
 The Episcopal Church
 HIAS
 International Rescue Committee
 Jewish Council for Public Affairs
 The Jewish Federations of North America
 Jewish Labor Committee
 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
 National Council of Jewish Women
 Union for Reform Judaism
 U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
 U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
 World Relief

Local Organizations and Leaders:

Alaska

Catholic Social Services, Anchorage

Arizona

Bishop Stephen Talmage, Grand Canyon Synod-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Phoenix
 Matt Landau, Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest , Tucson
 K. Kay Bircher, St. Charles Medical Center, NACC Chaplain Emeritus, Benson

Arkansas

Stephen Copley , Arkansas Interfaith Alliance, Little Rock

California

Bishop James R. Mathes, Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, San Diego
 Alan Murray, Grace Cathedral, Episcopal Church, San Francisco
 Anna Marie Hoos, Grace Cathedral, Episcopal, San Francisco
 Sarah Lawton, St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church, San Francisco
 Jewish Labor Committee Western Region, Los Angeles
 Meghan Tumilty, Episcopal Diocese of LA - Interfaith Refugee & Immigration Service, Los Angeles
 Warren Wong, St. James Episcopal Church, San Francisco
 Michael Hopkins, Jewish Family Service of San Diego, San Diego
 Rev. Dr. Larry Stoterau, Pacific Southwest District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Irvine
 Jessica Therkelsen, Asylum Access, Oakland
 Stephen Voss, President & CEO, International Institute of Los Angeles, Los Angeles
 Ellen Dumesnil, Executive Director, International Institute of the Bay Area, San Francisco

Colorado

Jennifer Gueddiche, ECDC African Community Center, Denver
James Barclay, Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains, Denver

Connecticut

Bishop Suffragan James E Curry, Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford
Angela R. Andersen, Executive Director, International Institute, Bridgeport

Florida

Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida
Catholic Charities Diocese of Venice, Florida
Bonnie A Weaver, Episcopalian, West Palm Beach
Rev. Gregory Walton, Florida-Georgia District-The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Orlando
Janet Solitt, National Council of Jewish Women, Florida State Policy Advocacy Committee, Fort Lauderdale
Jeanette E Smith, South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice, Miami
Russell Meyer, Florida Council of Churches & Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Tampa
Fran Ricardo, Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice, Gainesville
Lourdes B. Mesias, Lutheran Services Florida, Inc. Tampa
National Council of Jewish Women, Delray Beach
R. Wayne Rieley, Lutheran Social Services of NE FL, Jacksonville

Georgia

Bishop Julian Gordy, Southeastern Synod -Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Atlanta
Abby Koning, Lutheran Services of Georgia, Atlanta
Floyd Blair, Esq. President and CEO, Lutheran Services of Georgia, Atlanta
Victor Belton, Peace Lutheran Church, Decatur
Jacquelyn Ulrich, Lutheran Services of Georgia, Atlanta
Natalie Yasson, Lutheran Services of Georgia, Atlanta
Catholic Charities Atlanta

Illinois

Newland Smith, Episcopal Church Standing Commission on Social Justice and Public Policy, Evanston
Melineh Kano, Executive Director, RefugeeOne, Chicago
Jodi Doane, Director, HIAS Chicago
Kathlyn Myers, Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants, Chicago
Brian McLaughlin, SVD, Joint Immigration Venture, Techny
Marcia Brown, Catholic Charities, Kankakee
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Chicago
Michael Gosch, Provincial Council of the Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians), Arlington Heights
Michael Gosch Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants, Chicago
Bishop Wayne N. Miller, Metropolitan Chicago Synod- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Chicago
Louise Nolta, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, Northfield
David Sinski, Vice President and Executive Director, Heartland Human Care Services, Chicago
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America

Indiana

Sr Jessica Brock, Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame
Yohannes Mengsteab, The Lutheran Foundation , Ft. Wayne
Carleen Miller, Exodus Refugee Immigration Inc., Indianapolis

Iowa

Bishop Alan Scarfe, Episcopal Diocese of Iowa, Des Moines
Bishop Steven Ullestad, Northeastern Iowa Synod-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Waverly
Catholic Charities Diocese of Des Moines

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Dubuque

Amy Campos, Director, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Des Moines

Kentucky

Janet Dougherty, St Clements Episcopal House Church, Louisville

Margaret Stewart, St. Clement's Episcopal Church, Bishop's Committee, Louisville

Marianne Semones, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville

Elizabeth Kaznak, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville

Albert Mbanfu, Executive Director Western Kentucky Refugee Mutual Assistance Society Inc., Bowling Green

Kelly Hesler, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville

Kyle Johnson, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville

Emily Vitale, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville

Catholic Charities of Louisville

Michael Puckett, Elder Beargrass Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Louisville

Allison Duvall, Deputy, Diocese of Lexington, and Church Relations Manager at Episcopal Migration Ministries, Lexington

Anne Marie Vaughn, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Lexington

Tracey Meyers, Episcopal Church, Lexington

Richard Burden, Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, Richmond

Susan Fangman, Episcopal Church, Louisville

Eleanor Bingham Miller, St. Clemants Episcopal Church, Louisville

Bal Sharma, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville

Daniel Ruiz, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville

Napoleon Akayezu, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville

Allison Schumacher Smithkier, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville

Michaela Vaillant, Kentucky Refugee Ministry, Louisville

Lee Welsh, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville

Louisiana

Catholic Resettlement Center of Central Louisiana, Diocese of Alexandria-Shreveport

Maine

Catholic Charities Maine

Maryland

Lawrence Couch, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepard, Silver Spring

Massachusetts

Sheila Decter, Jewish Alliance for Law & Social Action, Boston

New England Jewish Labor Committee, Boston

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston

Angela Bovill, Lutheran Social Services of New England, Worcester

William Swanson, Lutheran Social Services of New England, Worcester

Carolyn Benedict-Drew, President, International Institute of New England

Michigan

Rev. Cindy Nawrocki, Episcopal Diocese of W. Michigan, Grand Rapids

Terri Pilarski, Episcopal Church Women's Caucus, Dearborn

Peter Vander Meulen, Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America, Grand Rapids

Jawhar Altahesh, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Sterling Heights

Maise Fakhouri, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Sterling Heights

Hadeel Marqus, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Sterling Heights

Raeed Gergees, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Troy

Maher Hendi, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Southfield

Dareen Haddad, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Sterling Heights
 Sime Avramovski, Refugee Services, Detroit
 Stephanie Appel, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Troy
 Sinan Yono, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Troy
 Andre Audo, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Sterling Heights
 Milad Latif, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Troy
 Nagham Jamil, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan Sterling Heights
 Fadi Jamil, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Troy
 Carmen Bordea Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Troy
 Perry Ohren, Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit, West Bloomfield
 Jamal Yoanes, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Troy
 Ali Zwayen, Lutheran Social Services Michigan, Troy
 Nibras Werdia, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Sterling Heights
 Jasna Spahic, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Troy
 Melad Yalda, Lutheran Social Services Michigan, Sterling Heights
 Basil Yousif, Lutheran social Services, Sterling Heights
 Nawras Wardia , Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Troy
 Shrina Patel, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor
 Jewan Poulis, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Troy
 Rani Afram, Lutheran Social Services, Sterling Heights

Minnesota

Catholic Charities Diocese of Winona
 John Joslin, Interfaith Coalition on Immigration, St. Paul
 The Center for Victims of Torture, St. Paul
 Jane Graupmen, International Institute, St. Paul

Mississippi

Catholic Charities, Inc., Diocese of Jackson
 Catholic Charities Diocese of Biloxi

Missouri

Refugee & Immigration Services, Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, Jefferson City
 Catholic Charities Refugee Services, Saint Louis
 Rev. Bart Day, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, St. Louis
 Hilary Singer, Jewish Vocational Services, Kansas City
 Ms. Anna Crosslin, President & CEO, International Institute of St. Louis
 Sister Carol Boschert, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO, O'Fallon

Montana

Margarita McLarty, Montana Women For, Livingston

New Mexico

Rev. Daniel Gutierrez, Episcopalian, Albuquerque

New Jersey

Bishop Rev. E. Roy Riley, New Jersey Synod-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Hamilton Square

New York

Eve Tamela, InterFaith works of Central New York, Syracuse
 Bishop Prince Singh, Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, Fairport
 Helen Malina, InterFaith Works of NY, Syracuse
 Barbara Demming, Rural & Migrant Ministry, Brockport
 Catholic Family Center, Rochester

North Carolina

Lola Olofintuyi , NC African Services Coalition, Greensboro
 Megan Fair, NC African Services Coalition, Greensboro
 Marcie Smith, Full Circles Foundation, Raleigh
 Sara Pascal, Interfaith Refugee Ministry , Wilmington
 Athena Hahn, National Episcopal Standing Commission on Social Justice and Public Policy Secretary, Raleigh
 Courtney McCurdy, Lutheran Services Carolinas, Raleigh
 Haneen Alsafi Lutheran Services Carolinas, Raleigh
 Sienna Saillen, African Services Coalition, Greensboro
 Liz Mukau, Lutheran Services Carolinas , Raleigh
 Marci Mroz, Carolina Refugee Resettlement Agency, Charlotte
 Dilli Wagley, Lutheran Services Carolinas, Raleigh
 Million Mekonnen, NC African Services Coalition, Greensboro
 Gai Riak, NC African Services Coalition, Greensboro
 Bishop A.C. Marble, Jr. , Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, Greensboro
 Nazrawi Sibhat, African Services Coalition, Greensboro

North Dakota

Katherine Dachtler, Lutheran Social Services New Americans, Grand Forks

Ohio

Barbara Glueck , Director, AJC Cincinnati Regional Office, Cincinnati
 Angie Plummer , Director, Community Refugee and Immigration Services, Columbus
 Maureen O'Meara, Social Action Representative, Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Dayton
 Refugee Services Collaborative of Greater Cleveland, Cleveland
 Michael Byun, Asian Services In Action, Cleveland
 Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley, Dayton
 Kelly Birkenhauer, Chair of Refugee Connect, Junior League of Cincinnati, Cincinnati
 US Together Inc., Columbus
 Jewish Family Services, Columbus
 Heartfelt Tidbits, Cincinnati
 Jennifer Johnson, State Refugee Coordinator, Columbus
 World Relief Columbus
 Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, President, House of Deputies, The Episcopal Church

Pennsylvania

Bishop Claire Burkat, South Eastern Pennsylvania Synod-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Philadelphia
 Richard Gitlen, Lutheran Children and Family Service of Eastern PA, Philadelphia
 Mary Hamilton, MMS Justice&Peace, Philadelphia
 HIAS Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
 Michael Hersch , Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee, Philadelphia
 Sandra L. Strauss, Pennsylvania Council of Churches, Harrisburg
 Rev. Sandra L. Strauss, Presbyterian Church (USA), Harrisburg

Rhode Island

Kathleen Cloutier, Executive Director, Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island, Providence

South Carolina

Margaret H. Jennings, Episcopalian, Columbia
 Sara Damewood, Catholic, Leesville
 Thomas Summers, United Methodist minister (retired), Columbia

Texas

Bishop Michael Rinehart, TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Houston

Erin Koechel, Refugee Services of Texas, Dallas
 Aaron Rippenkroeger, Refugee Services of Texas, Inc., Austin
 Catholic Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services, Inc., El Paso
 Catholic Charities Fort Worth
 Denise Sausville, Sisters of Mercy-Alamo
 Andrea Martinez, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Houston

Utah

Catholic Community Services of Utah, Salt Lake City

Virginia

Rev. Eric Wester, Chaplain (Colonel, Retired), US Army, Arlington
 Tsehaye Teferra, PhD, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc. , Arlington

Washington

Greg Hope, Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, Seattle
 Roberta Nestaas, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Seattle
 Jewish Family Service, Seattle

Washington, DC

Bishop Richard H. Graham, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 John Johnson, Member, Executive Council of The Episcopal Church

Wisconsin

Catholic Charities Milwaukee
 Mary Flynn, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Milwaukee
 David Larson, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Milwaukee
 Fessahaye Mebrahtu, Pan-African Community Association (PACA), Milwaukee