

CWS Policy Asks for 2023 August Recess

Each year, Congress takes a recess in August and members return to their home districts and states, often holding town halls and making themselves available to constituents. This August, CWS urges Congress to affirm the value and dignity of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants. With an unprecedented [110+ million](#) forcibly displaced people worldwide, including more than 37 million refugees, bold leadership is needed now more than ever.

During 2023 August recess, CWS urges Congress to:

1. Hold the administration accountable for setting a robust 2024 Presidential Determination (PD) and protecting the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program

Congress should encourage the administration to prioritize the USRAP rebuild and invest political will and resources into permanent protections. The Refugee Act requires the administration to meaningfully consult with Congress before signing a Presidential Determination on refugee admissions levels in September. In line with global need, we [urge](#) the Biden administration to set the FY 2024 refugee goal to at least 135,000 (including resettling 10,000 through the newly created Welcome Corps). We also urge Congress to hold the administration accountable for continuing to rebuild the refugee resettlement program and to enact reforms that address capacity constraints and reduce lengthy processing delays.

2. Support legislation that welcomes refugees and strengthens access to permanent protection

- **the Afghan Adjustment Act (AAA)** ([S.2327/H.R. 4627](#)). The bipartisan Afghan Adjustment Act would establish a clear and streamlined path for displaced Afghans to apply for permanent status in the U.S. and expand pathways to protection for Afghans who remain left behind and at risk.
- **The Refugee Protection Act (RPA)** (*reintroduction forthcoming*). The Refugee Protection Act would restore and strengthen the refugee resettlement program and asylum protections. The bill would also expand protections to those who have assisted U.S. troops and immigrant children and families.

Other critical legislation includes the New Deal for New Americans Act, the ASPIRE Act, the Protect Vulnerable Immigrant Youth Act, the Reuniting Families Act, and the Stateless Protection Act.

3. Ensure robust funding for the refugee resettlement program and the humane welcome of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Congress must provide robust funding to fully rebuild capacity for refugee resettlement, equip our local communities with the resources they need, and ensure refugees awaiting resettlement are experiencing fair and efficient processing. In upcoming appropriations bills or emergency supplementals, we urge Congress to support critical refugee accounts, like:

- **Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA)**. This account, within the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), supports the long-term integration and economic success of newly resettled Americans, unaccompanied children, and others, including job training, ESL, and medical and mental health services.
- **Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)**. This account, within the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), supports the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and other efforts to protect and assist refugees and other displaced people around the world.
- **Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA)**. This is an emergency account that allows for the speedy delivery of assistance in response to humanitarian emergencies and forced migration events as they arise. In 2023, the ERMA account has been completely drawn down, with no additional funding available.

We also urge Congress to support funding to [expand safe and affordable housing](#), to [address backlogs](#) within U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and to [support asylum seekers](#) via the Shelter and Services Program and expanded case management services. We urge Congress to reject additional funds that would be directed towards punitive, enforcement-based policies and the further militarization of the border.

Additional Resources: [WAAA August Policy Asks](#), [CWS 2023 Policy Asks](#), [Housing Policy Asks](#), [CWS Border Solutions](#)