

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2839

To reform and modernize domestic refugee resettlement programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 18, 2015

Mr. PASCRELL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To reform and modernize domestic refugee resettlement programs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. DOMESTIC REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT REFORM**

4 **AND MODERNIZATION.**

5 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

6 (1) COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION.—The
7 term “community-based organization” means a non-
8 profit organization providing a variety of social,
9 health, educational and community services to a pop-

1 ulation that includes refugees resettled into the
2 United States.

3 (2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
4 the Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement
5 in the Department of Health and Human Services.

6 (3) NATIONAL RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES.—
7 The term “national resettlement agencies” means
8 voluntary agencies contracting with the Department
9 of State to provide sponsorship and initial resettlement
10 services to refugees entering the United States.

11 (b) ASSESSMENT OF REFUGEE DOMESTIC RESET-
12 TLEMENT PROGRAMS.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after
14 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller
15 General of the United States shall conduct a
16 study regarding the effectiveness of the domestic ref-
17 ugee resettlement programs operated by the Office
18 of Refugee Resettlement.

19 (2) MATTERS TO BE STUDIED.—In the study
20 required under paragraph (1), the Comptroller Gen-
21 eral shall determine and analyze—

22 (A) how the Office of Refugee Resettle-
23 ment defines self-sufficiency and integration
24 and if these definitions adequately represent
25 refugees’ needs in the United States;

1 (B) the effectiveness of Office of Refugee
2 Resettlement programs in helping refugees to
3 meet self-sufficiency and integration;

4 (C) technological solutions for consistently
5 tracking secondary migration, including oppor-
6 tunities for interagency data sharing;

7 (D) the Office of Refugee Resettlement's
8 budgetary resources and project the amount of
9 additional resources needed to fully address the
10 unmet needs of refugees with regard to self-suf-
11 ficiency and integration;

12 (E) the role of community-based organiza-
13 tions in serving refugees in areas experiencing
14 a high number of new refugee arrivals;

15 (F) how community-based organizations
16 can be better utilized and supported in the Fed-
17 eral domestic resettlement process;

18 (G) recertification processes for high-
19 skilled refugees, specifically considering how to
20 decrease barriers for Special Immigrant Visa
21 holders to use their skills; and

22 (H) recommended statutory changes to im-
23 prove the Office of Refugee Resettlement and
24 the domestic refugee program in relation to the

1 matters analyzed under subparagraphs (A)
2 through (G).

3 (3) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the
4 date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller
5 General shall submit to Congress the results of the
6 study required under this subsection.

7 (c) REFUGEE ASSISTANCE.—

8 (1) ASSISTANCE MADE AVAILABLE TO SEC-
9 ONDARY MIGRANTS.—Section 412(a)(1) of the Im-
10 migration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1522(a)(1))
11 is amended by adding at the end the following:

12 “(C) The Director shall ensure that assistance under
13 this section is provided to refugees who are secondary mi-
14 grants and meet all other eligibility requirements for such
15 assistance.”.

16 (2) REPORT ON SECONDARY MIGRATION.—Sec-
17 tion 412(a)(3) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1522(a)(3)) is
18 amended—

19 (A) by inserting “(A)” after “(3)”;

20 (B) by striking “periodic” and inserting
21 “annual”; and

22 (C) by adding at the end the following:

23 “(B) At the end of each fiscal year, the Director shall
24 submit a report to Congress that includes—

1 “(i) States experiencing departures and arrivals
2 due to secondary migration;

3 “(ii) likely reasons for migration;

4 “(iii) the impact of secondary migration on
5 States hosting secondary migrants;

6 “(iv) the availability of social services for sec-
7 ondary migrants in those States; and

8 “(v) unmet needs of those secondary mi-
9 grants.”.

10 (3) AMENDMENTS TO SOCIAL SERVICES FUND-
11 ING.—Section 412(c)(1)(B) of such Act (8 U.S.C.
12 1522(c)(1)(B)) is amended—

13 (A) by inserting “a combination of—”
14 after “based on”;

15 (B) by striking “the total number” and in-
16 serting the following:

17 “(i) the total number”; and

18 (C) by striking the period at the end and
19 inserting the following:

20 “(ii) the total number of all other eligible popu-
21 lations served by the Office during the period de-
22 scribed who are residing in the State as of the be-
23 ginning of the fiscal year; and

1 “(iii) projections on the number and nature of
2 incoming refugees and other populations served by
3 the Office during the subsequent fiscal year.”.

4 (4) NOTICE AND RULEMAKING.—Not later than
5 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act
6 and not later than 30 days before the effective date
7 set forth in paragraph (5), the Director shall—

8 (A) issue a proposed rule for a new for-
9 mula by which grants and contracts are to be
10 allocated pursuant to the amendments made by
11 paragraph (3); and

12 (B) solicit public comment regarding such
13 proposed rule.

14 (5) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made
15 by this subsection shall become effective on the first
16 day of the first fiscal year that begins after the date
17 of the enactment of this Act.

18 (d) RESETTLEMENT DATA.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall expand
20 the Office of Refugee Resettlement’s data analysis,
21 collection, and sharing activities in accordance with
22 the requirements set forth in paragraphs (2)
23 through (5).

24 (2) DATA ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL MEDICAL
25 CASES.—The Director shall—

1 (A) coordinate with the Centers for Dis-
2 ease Control and Prevention, national resettle-
3 ment agencies, community-based organizations,
4 and State refugee health programs to track na-
5 tional and State trends on refugees arriving
6 with Class A medical conditions and other ur-
7 gent medical needs;

8 (B) examine the information sharing proc-
9 ess, from country of arrival through refugee re-
10 settlement, to determine if access to additional
11 mental health data could—

12 (i) help determine placements; and

13 (ii) enable agencies to better prepare
14 to meet refugee mental health needs; and

15 (C) in collecting information under this
16 paragraph, utilize initial refugee health screen-
17 ing data, including—

18 (i) a history of severe trauma, torture,
19 mental health symptoms, depression, anx-
20 iety, and posttraumatic stress disorder re-
21 corded during domestic and international
22 health screenings; and

23 (ii) Refugee Medical Assistance utili-
24 zation rate data.

1 (3) DATA ON HOUSING NEEDS.—The Director
2 shall partner with State refugee programs, commu-
3 nity-based organizations, and national resettlement
4 agencies to collect data relating to the housing needs
5 of refugees, including—

6 (A) the number of refugees who have be-
7 come homeless; and

8 (B) the number of refugees who are at se-
9 vere risk of becoming homeless.

10 (4) DATA ON REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT AND
11 SELF-SUFFICIENCY.—The Director shall gather lon-
12 gitudinal information relating to refugee self-suffi-
13 ciency, integration, and employment status during
14 the 2-year period beginning 1 year after the date on
15 which the refugees arrived in the United States.

16 (5) AVAILABILITY OF DATA.—The Director
17 shall annually—

18 (A) update the data collected under this
19 subsection; and

20 (B) submit a report to Congress that con-
21 tains the updated data.

22 (e) GUIDANCE REGARDING REFUGEE PLACEMENT
23 DECISIONS.—

24 (1) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of State
25 shall provide guidance to national resettlement agen-

1 cies and State refugee coordinators on consultation
2 with local stakeholders pertaining to refugee resettle-
3 ment.

4 (2) BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary of Health
5 and Human Services, in collaboration with the Sec-
6 retary of State, shall collect best practices related to
7 the implementation of the guidance on stakeholder
8 consultation on refugee resettlement from voluntary
9 agencies and State refugee coordinators and dissemi-
10 nate such best practices to such agencies and coordi-
11 nators.

12 (f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section (except for the
13 amendments made by subsection (c)) shall take effect on
14 the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment
15 of this Act.

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