

Meeting Talking Points

Background: With the crisis in Afghanistan, the push to include a path to citizenship in the Reconciliation package, the Administration's continued closure of the southern border to asylum seekers, and the new fiscal year for refugee admissions fast approaching, now is the time to connect with your Representatives and Senators about these issues, while they're home for recess. You can use the below talking points for discussion with your elected officials or their key staff people:

Background and Talking Points on Afghanistan situation

- We are witnessing a humanitarian crisis unfold in real time as Afghans desperately try to escape violence and retaliation at the hands of the Taliban.
- Tell President Biden he must prioritize humanitarian evacuations immediately.
- This includes not only Afghans and their families who were affiliated with the U.S. mission, but also human rights advocates (especially women and girls), journalists, and religious and ethnic minorities, all of whom will face grave danger without immediate assistance.

Background and Talking Points on Citizenship

- Congress must include a path to citizenship for Dreamers, TPS holders, and essential workers in the upcoming infrastructure and reconciliation budget package. It has been 35 years since Congress approved the last major piece of legislation providing a path to citizenship for immigrants.
- Dreamers and people with TPS are our neighbors and friends, and poll after poll shows that the vast majority of Americans support legal status for Dreamers.
- The need for Congressional action has never been greater. Last month, a federal judge in Texas ruled against the Deferred Action to Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA. This disappointing decision means yet more uncertainty and fear for young people hoping to build stable lives in the country they already call home. The ruling requires immediate legislative action to protect these immigrant youth.
- Providing a pathway to citizenship for TPS holders and immigrant youth, farm workers, and essential workers could boost our country's GDP by up to \$1.5 trillion dollars over 10 years. Providing citizenship for these individuals could also create over 400,000 jobs and raise wages by 31% over 10 years.

Background and Talking Points on Title 42

Background: Since March 21, 2020, successive administrations have shut down the southern border to asylum seekers, purportedly in response to the COVID pandemic. They claimed this authority, to prohibit immigration from places where there is existence of a communicable disease, under an obscure law codified in Title 42 of the United States Code. Custom and Border Protection now rapidly "expels" individuals from the United States without giving them the opportunity to apply for asylum.

The U.S. government has undertaken over 900,000 expulsions under Title 42 and related executive orders. The Biden administration has not rescinded this policy and plan to continue using it for the foreseeable future, although they have decided to exempt unaccompanied minors.

- The Biden administration should immediately end this misuse of our laws and end the expulsion of asylum seekers.
- There is little evidence that expelling asylum seekers under Title 42 does anything to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Numerous public health experts have repeatedly said that we can welcome asylum seekers without spreading COVID-19 using common-sense measures like social distancing.
- Misusing our public health laws to expel asylum seekers violates international and domestic law, and our humanity.
- Expelling asylum seekers puts human beings at risk of persecution, torture, or worse. There are thousands of recorded incidents against those expelled to Mexico under this policy, including kidnappings, sexual assaults, and other violence.

Background and Talking Points on Raising the Refugee Admission number to 125,000

- It is critical that the Biden Administration not only keeps their promise to raise the FY22 refugee admissions goal to 125,000, but also work to rebuild and restore the capacity of the program, which was badly damaged by the previous administration, by ensuring it has the proper funding and staffing to achieve this important goal.
- Worldwide, there are over 82.4 million displaced people, 31 million of which are refugees and 42% of whom are children. Less than 1% of refugees ever have the opportunity to be resettled to a third country.
- Religious communities built the U.S. refugee resettlement program, long before the government was involved. In the aftermath of World War II and beyond, churches, synagogues, and other faith communities helped resettle millions of refugees.
- Refugees contribute to their communities in many ways. Over a 20-year period, refugees contribute, on average, \$21,000 more in taxes than the initial investment to resettle them. In 2015, refugees contributed \$21 billion in U.S. taxes. Additionally, refugees are serving on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. During the COVID-19 crisis, refugees are working on the frontlines and in essential jobs, including 161,000 working in health care and 170,000 in the food supply chain.

- Resettlement is critical to U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives, and must be part of a comprehensive strategy to respond to refugee crises, promote regional stability, and strengthen U.S. national security.
- Resettlement is a moral, humanitarian imperative. Welcoming people who have been forced to flee their homes because of violence and persecution is the right thing to do.