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## **REFUGEE ACTION COALITION OF COLORADO CONDEMNS UNPRECEDENTED LOW CAP ON REFUGEE ADMISSIONS SET BY TRUMP ADMINISTRATION**

### **ADVOCATES URGE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO ASSERT THEIR OVERSIGHT POWER TO MITIGATE DAMAGING PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION**

**Denver, CO**—Members of the Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado strongly condemn the alarmingly and egregiously low [Presidential Determination](#)—or cap—set for the number of [refugee admissions](#) to the United States for fiscal year 2026 as [posted on the Federal Register](#) by the Trump Administration.

The unprecedented new cap of just 7,500 reflects a continued trend of reversing the country’s longstanding global leadership in welcoming refugees, of whom the U.S. resettled nearly 75,000 per year over the two and half decades preceding Trump’s first presidency. The figure amounts to just 6% of the 125,000 cap set by the outgoing Biden Administration and is even lower than the cap of 15,000 set for fiscal year 2021 as Trump finished his first term. Additionally, allocating refugee resettlement places primarily to Afrikaners supplants opportunities for more vulnerable refugees who have been awaiting resettlement for years or even decades. Without question, this means that the quantity of refugees coming to the U.S. in 2026 will be vastly inconsistent with growing international need while admissions practices appallingly ignore the humanitarian imperative to respond to exigent circumstances of forced displacement.

The [Refugee Act of 1980](#), signed into law by President Jimmy Carter, established the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and the asylum system. Subsequent decades of both Republican and Democratic leadership championed the welcoming of refugees. Trump’s harmful actions and denigrating rhetoric represent a departure from all other administrations since 1980 while echoing tactics from his previous presidential term, when he also paused the program and repeatedly lowered the annual Presidential Determination. Upon his second inauguration, he [suspended USRAP indefinitely](#). This has stranded over 100,000 refugees who had already been approved for resettlement when Trump took office. It also triggered massive layoffs and service disruptions throughout the resettlement network that is responsible for supporting successful integration of already-arrived refugees.

Organizations and community members associated with RACC condemn the Trump Administration’s approach as xenophobic, draconian, and harmful to Coloradans and the U.S. more broadly. “For decades, Coloradans and other Americans across the political spectrum have welcomed [refugees](#) and benefited from the positive economic, humanitarian, and security impacts of resettlement,” says Paula Schriefer, President & CEO of Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning, a Denver-based nonprofit and co-founder of RACC. “This FY26 Presidential Determination reflects a flagrant disregard for the wellbeing of vulnerable displaced peoples from around the globe, further degrading U.S. [soft power](#) and increasing global instability.”

Actions restricting immigration have been disingenuously characterized by the Trump Administration as promoting public safety, yet [research shows](#) that immigrants, regardless of documentation status, are less likely than U.S.-born individuals to commit crimes and immigration is actually associated with safer communities. Since 1980, 80,000 refugees have resettled in Colorado. They have played an especially crucial role in our shared prosperity by generating \$1.68 in economic activity for every \$1 provided to them in assistance, according to a [report by the Colorado Department of Human Services](#). In 2023 alone, [refugee Coloradans](#) paid \$127.1 million in state and local taxes and had a combined household income of \$1.4 billion. Heightened scrutiny and deterrence of

refugees is not only inhumane and economically detrimental, it is patently unnecessary since refugees admitted to the U.S. have historically been the most heavily screened and vetted individuals to arrive on U.S. soil.

“We are deeply disappointed by the Trump Administration’s new refugee admissions cap,” added [Colorado Refugee Speakers Bureau](#) Steering Committee Members Homayoon Milad, Raoudha Zelaya, Lojohomoi Lokonobei, and Kansime Shalom. “Coloradans stand ready to help newcomers rebuild their lives and contribute to our shared future as they fill vital workforce roles and bring hope and resilience to our communities. This cap falls far short of meeting the needs of 123.2 million people forcibly displaced globally while completely ignoring our welcoming values.”

“Setting this low and exclusionary PD in the name of our national interest is unconscionable,” added Ron Buzard, Managing Director, African Community Center. “It causes us to turn our backs on the persecuted and it ignores the contributions of former refugees that we all benefit from today. To act as though the U.S. does not have the capacity or resources to offer protection and refuge to more individuals from more regions of the world in FY26 is, at its core, un-American.”

“We’ve seen firsthand that refugees contribute immensely to Colorado’s economy and civic life,” added representatives of Empowering Communities Globally. “Every refugee who arrives in Colorado brings skills, resilience, and a commitment to building a better life. Restricting their entry undermines our shared prosperity. Deterring them is cruel and shortsighted.”

Echoing advocacy demands from their [March 2025 letter to the Departments of State and Homeland Security](#) and in solidarity with national allies who co-endorsed a recent [public letter to Congress](#) organized by [Refugee Council USA](#), RACC insists that Colorado’s delegation do everything in their power to:

- Urge the administration to fulfill its legal responsibilities under the *Refugee Act of 1980* by conducting meaningful consultations with Congress in setting annual refugee admissions goals and to set a future refugee admissions goal of at least 125,000 – a level that reflects both the global scale of need and would accommodate the more than 120,000 refugees already conditionally approved for resettlement.
- Pressure the administration to welcome the most vulnerable, at-risk through the refugee admissions program, including by prioritizing those who have been waiting for years in the pipeline and have been stranded by the refugee ban.
- Defend federal investments in refugee processing, admissions, and resettlement services and fully restore refugees’ access to basic healthcare, nutrition assistance, and social services to ensure that newly arriving families have the opportunity to thrive.

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The [Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado \(RACC\)](#) advocates for and with refugees to promote a welcoming community and to advance opportunities where refugees thrive. [Learn more](#) or [apply to join RACC](#).

[Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning](#) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to build a thriving intercultural community through learning, language access, and advocacy and is a founder of RACC. Follow on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

The [African Community Center of Denver \(ACC\)](#) is a non-profit refugee resettlement agency whose mission is to help refugees and immigrants rebuild safe, sustainable lives in Colorado.

[Empowering Communities Globally: For the Care of Children](#) partners with communities to build capacity and opportunity. Through initiatives in early childhood, community development, workforce development, language justice, and advocacy, our organization amplifies the voices of community members, supporting projects that produce lasting intergenerational impact.