

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

### IMMIGRATION & THE US-MEXICO BORDER DURING THE PANDEMIC: A CONVERSATION WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS – APR 22

In a bipartisan discussion organized by the Wilson Center's Mexico Institute and the Migration Policy Institute, two border-state members of Congress – Rep. Veronica Escobar of El Paso and Rep. Dan Crenshaw of suburban Houston – will discuss the response to the coronavirus outbreak, how it is affecting the border region, and what the future might hold. The webcast will be held on April 22 from 4-5 PM EDT. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

### COVID-19'S EFFECTS ON EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION STATUS – APR 22

Many immigrants who came to the United States on a work-related visa or have employment authorization subsequently are affected by the economic changes due to COVID-19. Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts will host a webinar on April 22 from 1-2:30PM EDT to discuss how these changes may affect status, qualifications for unemployment insurance, and how seeking out funding affects status. Register [here](#).

### KAMA DC + IMMIGRANT FOOD PRESENT VIRTUAL WINE WEDNESDAY: COVID-19 & IMMIGRATION – APRIL 29

KAMA DC and Immigrant Food are partnering with immigration experts to discuss the immigrant community perspective in terms of the impact of COVID-19 and resulting policies on immigration issues. The April 29 panel will be held from 6-7 PM EDT and will feature Marshall Fitz, Director of Immigration at Emerson Collective. This free event will also feature a musical Oud performance and discounts on orders from Immigrant Food DC. Register [here](#).



## Biden's Immigration Platform: What Has Changed from 2016?

By Mario Bruzzone

The primary campaign for the Democratic nomination ended on April 8, when Joe Biden's last rival, Bernie Sanders, officially suspended his campaign. The COVID-19 outbreak had halted all in-person campaigning, but Biden had already built a commanding delegate lead. Last Monday, five days later, Sanders endorsed Biden for president. Biden will face Donald Trump in November, with stakes so large for both refugees and immigrants in the United States that the difference is difficult to overstate. Here in Washington, a re-elected Trump is widely expected to end refugee resettlement and functionally end asylum, as well as worsen the marginalization of non-white immigrants throughout the U.S.

In public, Biden's immigration positions will likely evolve as he positions himself for the general election.

It is anyone's guess whether Biden—really, the Biden team—moves left to appeal to young voters and Sanders voters, or moves right as Democrats have done in the recent past, ostensibly to appeal to suburban moderates. Behind the scenes, Biden's team will ready a series of executive actions in preparation for the presidential transition. Presidents have many policy tools. The obvious policy tools are Executive Orders and political appointments, but the powers of the Executive also include federal rulemaking, strategic plans, documents like the State Department's Foreign Affairs Manual, and substantial control over both hiring and job duties for career staff in the government. Immigration advocates will evaluate Biden's commitment to the communities we serve in part through his administration's sophistication at employing those tools, should he be elected.

Read this week's full brief [here](#).

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### NEW USCIS GUIDANCE FOR LIBERIANS

USCIS has issued a policy guidance for adjustment of status applications based on the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness (LRIF) provision in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (NDAA). Read it [here](#).

### FEDERAL REGISTER ANNOUNCEMENT, COMMENTS DUE – APR 28

The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) have published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to the Federal Register regarding some EOIR forms, including instituting a \$50 fee for an asylum application. Fees for other forms could increase by up to 900%. Submit comments [here](#).

### USCRI COVID-19 RESOURCES

[Nonprofit Organizations and the CARES Act](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #1: Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act \(March 6\)](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #2: Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(March 18\)](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #3: Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act \(March 28\)](#)

[Bill Preview: Coronavirus Immigrant Families Protection Act \(April 6\)](#)

### • Senate Democrats Urge Trump Administration to Automatically Extend Work Authorizations for DACA and TPS Recipients

Senate Democrats Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY) led a [letter](#) by Senate Democrats on April 15 to urge that Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) for holders of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) be automatically extended under the current COVID-19 pandemic. The senators wrote, “This simple measure, which is well within your executive authority, will save American lives and avoid further disruptions to our economy. By contrast, going ahead with your Administration’s efforts to deport more than a million DACA and TPS recipients would be needlessly cruel and greatly weaken our nation’s essential workforce.”

### • State Attorneys General Ask Supreme Court to Temporarily Suspend Public Charge Rule

On April 13, the state Attorneys General of [Connecticut](#), [New York](#), and Vermont [requested](#) that the Supreme Court temporarily suspend the public charge rule during the COVID-19 pandemic that was nationally implemented on February 21. The public charge rule allows federal officials to reject applications for a green card, immigrant visa, or temporary visa if the applicant has previously accessed or is considered likely to rely on certain forms of public assistance. In March, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), [stated](#) that it would not count testing, treatment, or preventative care for COVID-19 under the public charge rule. However, the Attorneys General argue that this guidance is not clear enough to assure immigrants they will not be in danger by accessing assistance at this time.

### • Florida Representative Introduces Bill to Rescind Migrant and Refugee Assistance in CARES Act

On April 10, Representative Matt Gaetz (R-FL-1) introduced a [bill](#) to modify the recent Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act that was signed into law on March 27. The proposed modification would rescind the \$350 million allocated for the Migrant and Refugee Assistance (MRA) fund. The bill proposes to redirect the MRA funds to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As of April 19, the bill has no cosponsors or other support.

### • Turkey Releases Refugees from Quarantine Amid Mandatory Lockdowns

When Turkey opened its border with Greece in early March, thousands of refugees seeking to cross into Europe flocked to crossing points. However, Greek officials pushed them back into Turkey, where they were forced into mandatory, inadequate, and crowded quarantine facilities. While the refugees were released this week, many had nowhere to go and were arrested on the streets for violating mandatory lockdown orders.

# USCRI Time Machine

*This week's Time Machine comes from USCRI's 1999 report East Timor: A Crisis of Displacement.*

*In 1999, the small, southeast Asian island state of East Timor (Timor-Leste) was emerging from more than two decades of violence under the Indonesian occupation that had begun in 1975. Sadly, in April 1999, conflict ignited after an independence referendum and would last until 2002, leaving thousands dead. USCRI issued recommendations for peacebuilding and support for internally displaced Timorese:*

*"To the United Nations: 1) Establish a war crimes tribunal to bring to trial those responsible for human rights abuses and other crimes in East Timor. 2) Ensure the participation of the leadership of East Timor (including the leader of the CNRT) in every level of decision making and administration as East Timor moves?? toward independence under UNTAET.*

*To UNHCR and IOM: 1) Ensure that all returns to East Timor are fully voluntary and based on the best available information; inform potential returnees about all aspects of the situation in East Timor, including ongoing security concerns. Combat militia propaganda regarding the source of violence. 2) Ensure adequate?? of the East Timorese returning from West Timor and other islands of Indonesia, without unnecessarily delaying the process of return.*

*To the United States: 1) Provide sufficient funds, through supplemental appropriations if necessary and/or through drawdowns of the Emergency Migration and Refugee Assistance (ERMA) account, to meet the ongoing humanitarian needs in East Timor during the fiscal year 2000. 2) Provide Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for East Timorese presently in the United States. 3) Enact the East Timorese Self-Determination Act of 1999, which would codify the Clinton Administration's restrictions on financial and military assistance to Indonesia until certain conditions are met in East Timor. 4) Provide a multi-year commitment to UNTAET."*

*In 2002, East Timor was renamed Timor-Leste and became a Member State of the United Nations. The country has not been entirely free of conflict in its 18 years since independence, with a significant period of violence following 2006 elections. In 2012, the United Nations ended its peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste.*

## Global Gigabyte

The first Afghan female refugee gynecologist in Pakistan is on the front line of fighting COVID-19 in the country's poorest communities. Dr. Saleema Rehman, an ethnic Turkmen from Afghanistan, was born in a refugee camp and struggled to seek an education as a female. Recently, she graduated medical school in Pakistan specializing in gynecology and obstetrics. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she has been treating vulnerable poor Pakistanis and refugees at Holy Family Hospital in the city of Rawalpindi where treatment is free of charge for all patients.

Dr. Rehman says that by treating Pakistanis she is paying back her host country: "My family shall remain ever thankful to the Pakistani people for their hospitality and generosity. If peace prevails in Afghanistan, it will be my honor to serve people in the country."

Read more about Dr. Rehman [here](#).

If you have any questions  
or comments, please  
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