

Upcoming Meetings & Events

IMMIGRATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING – JULY 21

On Tuesday, July 21 at 7 PM EDT, the Dover Town Library will host a webinar discussing the intersection of immigration and human trafficking in the United States. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

A CONVERSATION ON 2020'S TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT – JULY 22

On Wednesday, July 22 at 11:30 am EDT, the State Department will hold a Q&A with Ambassador John Cotton Richmond on its 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report. To register and for more information, click [here](#).

IMMIGRATION POLICY AT A TIME OF MASS UNEMPLOYMENT? – JULY 23

The Labour Party Economic Society will host a webinar on Thursday, July 23 at 2:30pm EDT on economic issues of immigration. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

TRUMP'S EFFECT ON H-1B, L-1 VISAS & GREEN CARDS-- JULY 29

On Wednesday, July 29, VisaPro will host a webinar to discuss alternatives for H-1B and L-1 visa applicants as well as the impacts that the latest proclamation has on applications for green cards. For more information and to register, click [here](#).



International Student Policies: A Failing Grade for the United States

By Kelly Ann Whelan

Amid the chaos of the pandemic, the Administration has systematically pushed the walls in on the immigration space, even for those seeking a temporary stay in the United States. These bans include those placed on skilled foreign employees in the H-1B, J, and L visa categories, as well as temporary visitors in the B-1 and B-2 visa categories. Yet, these bans only affected applicants and not those already within the United States. However, in early July, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced the newest crackdown on immigrants, this time targeting both students seeking to come to the United States to study, and those already in the country at a time where many college campuses have been forced to operate fully virtually in order to protect against COVID-19. Under the policy, students would not be able to remain in the country if they were taking a full online course load. In particular, the DHS announcement stated that,

Nonimmigrant F-1 and M-1 students attending schools operating entirely online may **not** take a full online course load and remain in the United States.

The U.S. Department of State will not issue visas to students enrolled in schools and/or programs that are fully online for the fall semester nor will U.S. Customs and Border Protection permit these students to enter the United States. Active students currently in the United States enrolled in such programs must depart the country or take other measures, such as transferring to a school with in-person instruction to remain in lawful status. If not, they may face immigration consequences including, but not limited to, the initiation of removal proceedings.

The message was clear: students must pick between protecting their lives and health and continuing their course of study. Outraged, several universities sued the administration, including Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In response, the Administration reversed its policy; a rare move.

Read the entire brief [here](#).

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ASYLUM COMMENTS

The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have published a [proposed rule](#) that would give the power to the agencies to categorically disqualify asylum-seekers from protection if the government determines they could spread an infectious disease, including COVID-19, in the United States. The new regulation would expand the definition of "a danger to security" to include those who officials determine could spread a contagious disease. Further, the rule would bar asylum-seekers who have contracted COVID-19 while in the United States waiting for an asylum hearing from receiving refugee protections. Submit comments on this rule by August 10 [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)

[COVID-19 Bill #4: Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act](#) (April 23, 2020)

[Executive Order: Suspension of Immigration Following COVID-19 Outbreak](#) (April 23)

[Flores Enforcement Actions and COVID-19](#) (April 27)

[The HEROES Act](#) (May 12, 2020)

[The Impact of COVID-19 in Refugee Camp](#) (June 9, 2020)

United States Issue Updates

• Unannounced Visits by DHS OIG Find Rights Violations and Unlawful Living Conditions in ICE Detention

On July 1, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released its annual report from unannounced inspections of immigration-detention facilities. The report is mandated by Congress to ensure compliance by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The OIG visited four facilities. OIG found "practices that infringed on detainee rights" and "identified living conditions at three facilities that violate ICE standards." Read the final report [here](#).

• ICE Rescinds Policy on Foreign Students

On Tuesday, July 14, the Trump Administration rescinded a policy that would have forced foreign students who do not have in-person classes to transfer institutions or leave the United States. The move came just as a Boston judge was to hear a lawsuit against the policy led by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Numerous other universities had filed suits separately.

• 86,000 Comments Received on Proposed Asylum Regulation

On Wednesday, July 15, the comment period closed for the new proposed regulation on "Procedures for Asylum and Withholding of Removal; Credible Fear and Reasonable Fear Review." In response, the Administration received 86,661 comments from advocates and concerned citizens. The rule would dramatically decrease the ability of individuals with protection needs from being granted asylum in the United States. Read the proposed regulation [here](#).

• Judge Extends Deadline for Releasing Children in Family Detention

On Thursday, July 16, Judge Dolly Gee granted an extension of an earlier deadline for releasing children from federal family detention in facilities in Berks, Pennsylvania, Dilley, Texas, and Karnes, Texas. The new deadline is July 27. The delay was a joint request by the plaintiffs and DHS attorneys. A ruling in a related case that regards the parents in the same detention centers is expected from Judge James Boasberg this week.

• United States and Canada Extend Border Restrictions

On Thursday, July 16, the United States and Canada issued a joint announcement that current restrictions on non-essential travel will be extended through August 21. The restrictions were initially issued in March, with the growth of the COVID-19 outbreak in both countries. Although Mexico was not party to the announcement, the restrictions also apply to land crossings into the United States from Mexico. As of publication, the U.S. government had announced the extension via press conference and Twitter but not on any government website.

US Issue Updates (Cont'd)

• **Second Circuit Rules Against Administration Asylum Changes for Survivors of Gang and Domestic Violence**

On Friday, July 17, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed in part a lower-court ruling in the case *Grace v. Barr*. The Court ruled that the Trump administration had violated portions of the Administrative Procedures Act in changing asylum standards that pertained to the lack of government control over persecution as well as standards in different U.S. circuit-court jurisdictions. The ruling affirmed current policy around which "particular social groups" are permitted under asylum law, known as the circularity rule. Read the ruling [here](#).

Around the World in International Migration

• **Sweden Resumes Refugee Resettlement**

After discussions between its Migration Agency and Public Health Agency, Sweden will again resettle refugees. The first group of new refugees will arrive in August. As part of the European Union, Sweden is allocated a resettlement quota each year. This year, Sweden's allocation is approximately 5,000 individuals referred by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

• **Ethiopians Stranded in Yemen, COVID-19 Likely Widespread**

COVID-19 related restrictions have caused tens of thousands of Ethiopian migrants to be stranded in Yemen, according to the [International Organization for Migration](#) (IOM). Yemen is a major transit country on the Horn of Africa-Arabian Gulf migration route. Without access to social services, migrants being forcibly transferred between Yemen's Aden, Marib, Lahi and Sa'ada governorates, are unable to proceed to other destinations or return home. Official figures put the Ethiopian population stranded in Yemen at 14,500, but the IOM says the actual figure is likely to be much higher.

• **Mauritania Joins Palermo Protocol Against Human Trafficking**

Mauritania's National Assembly passed a new law against trafficking in persons and endorsed a reform of the law against migrant smuggling. The legislation aligns Mauritania law with the United Nations [Palermo Protocol](#) to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children. Mauritania ratified the Palermo Protocol in 2005 but has struggled to combat labor trafficking and other rights violations. [IOM](#) supported the legal reforms.

• **Refugee Council of Australia Releases Report on Migrant Offshoring "Seven Years On"**

A [new report](#) released by the Refugee Council of Australia compiles data showing the harmful effects of Australia's draconian asylum policies. The Australian Government has spent \$7.6 billion AUS to impede approximately 4,100 asylum-seekers since 2012. According to the report, more than 3,000 people have been detained offshore since the current iteration of the policy began in 2013. Of these, 1,220 are currently in Australia for medical treatment and considered "transitory persons," 436 remain on Papua New Guinea and Nauru, and 12 have died offshore. The remainder have been returned to their country of origin or resettled in a third country, including the United States.

Whispers from Washington

Current Capitol Hill Considerations

Push for USCIS Guardrails

A group of senators led by Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) is pushing for greater accountability measures, or "guardrails," to be imposed on U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as a part of any bailout the agency gets for the self-inflicted budget crisis the Administration has created.

Specifically, the senators are asking for the following:

- Require USCIS to implement measures that generate new revenue without new or increased fees;
- Ensure the availability of fee waivers;
- Prohibit USCIS from transferring funding to enforcement agencies, or from using Congress' funding within USCIS on redundant anti-fraud programs;
- Require USCIS to adopt measures to increase transparency, fiscal responsibility and efficiency;
- Require USCIS to provide remote naturalization ceremonies to accommodate people who have been on a lengthy legal pathway to U.S. citizenship during the coronavirus crisis.

No Ban Act Headed to the House Floor

On Wednesday, July 22, the House will vote on the No Ban Act ([H.R.2214](#)). The legislation would immediately repeal the Administration's blanket ban on entries from Muslim-majority countries. It would also repeal rules that specifically target refugees and asylum-seekers who arrive at the U.S.-Mexico border, and expand the nondiscrimination clause within the Immigration and Nationality Act.

The bill also imposes limitations on immigration-related restrictions, such as requiring the President, Department of State (DOS), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to (1) only issue a restriction when required to address a compelling government interest, and (2) narrowly tailor the suspension to use the least restrictive means to achieve such an interest.

Global Gigabyte

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in Iran, Afghan refugee Fezzeh Hosseini has been working tirelessly to help local and Afghan patients affected by the virus.

Fezzeh, a 38-year-old Afghan refugee, was recently appointed as head of the coronavirus public outreach program in Iran's central Esfahan province. On top of her usual duties as head physician at the Razi hospital in Khomeini-Shahr, an area of Esfahan, she now provides phone consultations to Iranian and Afghan patients suffering from or at risk of contracting the virus. For months now, she has stayed well past opening hours with her team of five medical personnel to make phone calls to some 200 families every evening.

On top of her tireless work at the hospital and the extra shifts she volunteers for at pop-up COVID-19 clinics, Fezzeh organizes regular group calls with Afghan women and girls in her community to share information about hygiene and health practices and to lend a caring ear to those feeling the indirect impacts of COVID-19.

"An increasing number of women over the last months have told me that they are experiencing more and more domestic conflicts, due to increased stress as a result of the loss of livelihoods to COVID," she says.

"Being an Afghan like my patients, they feel they can open up to me as we share the same culture and experiences," she adds. "But what makes me most proud, is that people see me as someone who can help them, not just as a refugee."

Read more [here](#).

If you have any questions
or comments, please
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