

July 18, 2017

Dear Representative:

The undersigned 36 non-governmental organizations urge you to support the amendment to authorize the [Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration \(PRM\), Department of State](#) (“PRM”). In June a [leaked memo](#) revealed that the administration is considering dissolving or devolving PRM into another Department or office. One option under consideration would shift the refugee resettlement functions of PRM from the State Department (“DOS”) to the [Department of Homeland Security](#) (“DHS”). The proposed shift would dramatically reframe U.S. refugee policy as a national security threat rather than a humanitarian mandate.

As the lead agency responsible for managing the [U.S. Refugee Admissions Program](#) (“USRAP”), PRM directs U.S. admission policies and coordinates the overseas processing of refugees. PRM handles the transportation and initial reception and integration of refugees. Finally, PRM administers U.S. funding to the United Nations Refugee Agency and other overseas programs that assist refugees.

PRM derives its mandate from longstanding legislation including the U.S. [Refugee Act of 1980](#) (“Refugee Act”). The Refugee Act standardized the resettlement services for all refugees admitted to the U.S., established an annual consultation requirement between Congress and the President, and funded a new Office of U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs and an Office of Refugee Resettlement. The Refugee Act, which amended the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1954, provides the legal basis for today’s USRAP.

Earlier this week [58 former diplomats and national security advisors](#) called on the Secretary of State to keep the refugee resettlement functions of PRM at DOS instead of moving them to DHS. The signatories are former officials who served in [Republican administrations and Democratic administrations](#):

“We write at a time in which world displacement is at the highest level ever recorded, which underscores the critical importance of U.S. capacity to address this crucial global issue. In this respect, the Administration is very fortunate to have been extremely well-served by [PRM]... PRM... plays, in effective partnership with USAID, a key role in

promoting U.S. humanitarian and foreign policy interests, and has been an extraordinarily valuable tool for [DOS] and the Secretary of State—now and over the past decades.”

Transferring the refugee resettlement functions of PRM from DOS to DHS is not a matter of bureaucratic restructuring. There is simply too much at stake when it comes to protecting refugees fleeing violence and ensuring that humanitarian priorities are integrated into U.S. foreign policy.

We urge you to adopt the amendment to authorize PRM.

Sincerely,

African Services Committee

Alianza Americas

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

Amnesty International USA

Asian Americans Advancing Justice –Atlanta

Boat People S.O.S.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Refugee & Immigration Ministries

Church World Service

Franciscan Action Network

Freedom Network USA

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC

Human Rights First

Human Rights Initiative of North Texas

Jesuit Refugee Service/USA

Kids in Need of Defense

Latin America Working Group

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees

Muslim Public Affairs Council

NAFSA: Association of International Education

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Peace Action

Save the Children USA

Sisters of the Living World

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO

STAND: The Student-Led Movement to End Mass Atrocities

Refugee Solidarity Network

RefugePoint

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

Union for Reform Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

United Congregations MetroEast, Alton-Godfrey Cluster

WOLA (Washington Office on Latin America)