



GCIR CIII Federal Policy Update: June 2024

Asylum

On June 4th President Biden [signed an executive order](#) that **fundamentally undermines the right for individuals fleeing dangerous conditions to seek asylum in the United States**. The order, with some limited exceptions, including for unaccompanied minors, ends the longstanding US policy of allowing individuals who present at a border the chance to apply for asylum. Instead, **the border will be closed to new arrivals once an arbitrary target of 2,500 irregular crossings per day is reached** - a figure that is unsurprisingly already being exceeded given push factors including armed conflicts, gender-based violence, and political persecution that have [displaced millions around the globe](#).

While individuals who can demonstrate that they meet the legal standard of “credible fear” (a high bar given language barriers and lack of legal representation) can ostensibly still enter the United States and pursue an asylum case, the harsh reality is that **most individuals will be turned back to Mexico where they will have to contend with the risk of violence**, kidnapping, and illness in overcrowded and unsanitary encampments.

The new policy, which will only allow the border to be reopened once crossings fall below an average of 1,500 individuals per day for a week, is more stringent in some ways than the failed immigration bill [covered by GCIR earlier this year](#), with the ACLU already announcing its intention to file suit. The President’s willingness to unilaterally shut down the asylum system is **not only harmful to those who will be subjected to greater suffering, but also perpetuates an anti-immigrant narrative** while validating similar approaches employed by the Trump administration to end access to asylum.

Restricting legal asylum pathways does not reduce demand for safety, but instead pushes desperate individuals deeper into inhospitable regions of the border to attempt to cross there, while increasing the incentives for individuals to risk their lives with smugglers who promise safe passage - a choice which sometimes ends in [deadly consequences](#).

GCIR rejects prioritization of the supposed political expediency of “getting tough on the border.” We recently partnered with Hispanics in Philanthropy to host a delegation of funders for a [cross-border learning experience](#) with nonprofits operating in the Rio Grande Valley. **This executive order underscores the need for philanthropy to double down on deep, long-term funding** that supports the power-building and narrative change work necessary to counter these sorts of extreme policies. We must work to [put the US on a path to a more just immigration system](#).

For additional information visit Welcome with Dignity <https://welcomewithdignity.org/>



Refugee Resettlement

By September of this year, President Biden will establish the FY 2025 Refugee admissions cap, which is currently set at 125,000 individuals. While in FY 2023 the US fell far short of its 125,000 admissions determination with just [60,000 admitted](#), it [may actually be on track to reach 125,000 in FY 2024](#), with nearly 50,000 refugees admitted halfway through the fiscal year.

Ahead of the new determination, advocates are circulating a letter calling on the administration to continue rebuilding the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) by making investments that can “withstand external pressures, refugee emergencies, and political transitions.” A campaign is underway to secure sign-ons to the letter from state and local elected officials.

For additional information visit the Refugee Action Lab campaign page:
<https://welcomingrefugees2025.org/>

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Democratic Representation

In early May, the US House of Representatives [passed a bill](#) that would add a citizenship question to the United States Census, a measure that former President Trump unsuccessfully tried to adopt through executive action before being [blocked by the Supreme Court](#). Beyond adding the question to the Census, the law would also require that non-citizens be excluded from the apportionment of congressional seats.

Advocates fear that the measure, which passed on a party line vote and is unlikely to pass the US Senate in its current composition, would likely lead to a chilling effect, with fewer noncitizens choosing to participate in the census. This undercount of immigrant populations would lead to fewer federal resources directed to the communities in which they live, exacerbating the harmful impact of the bill which would also decrease their Congressional representation. The measure is part of a [broader wave of anti-immigrant legislation and rhetoric](#), including recent Congressional hearings on non-citizen voting, and state-level bills to prohibit efforts to expand the franchise in local contexts, independent of federal elections.

GCIR supports [efforts to restore voting for certain immigrant populations at the local level](#) (as is already the case in a number of jurisdictions), recognizing that the right to vote at one point [did not require citizenship](#). The restrictions largely came into force during a time when the US was actively suppressing the votes of the newly freed Black community, and when the federal government was also fearful of the potential political power of newly arriving immigrants.