

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2655

To establish a community-based refugee reception program to provide initial refugee resettlement services, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 1, 2025

Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To establish a community-based refugee reception program to provide initial refugee resettlement services, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Community-based Ref-
5 ugee Reception Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of Congress that—

8 (1) community-based refugee reception is not a
9 replacement for resettlement services provided
10 through experienced providers but serves as an effec-

1 tive complement to existing resettlement pathways
2 by increasing the capacity of local communities to
3 resettle refugees in the United States;

4 (2) in addition to supporting self-sufficiency of
5 refugees, participation in community-based reception
6 encourages United States citizens to meaningfully
7 engage with their neighbors and local institutions
8 while working toward a common goal;

9 (3) the Department of State should utilize all
10 available tools to expand avenues for United States
11 citizens to participate in refugee resettlement and
12 capitalize on widespread interest in community-
13 based reception models;

14 (4) the United States Refugee Admissions Pro-
15 gram is a critical demonstration of efforts by the
16 United States to extend hope, strengthen global se-
17 curity, and relieve suffering through refugee resettle-
18 ment;

19 (5) although less than 1 percent of global refu-
20 gees will ever be resettled in a third country, refu-
21 gees resettled in the United States between 2005
22 and 2019 contributed a staggering
23 \$123,800,000,000 in net benefit to the economy ac-
24 cording to studies conducted by the Federal Govern-
25 ment;

1 (6) the world is currently faced with the great-
2 est displacement and refugee crisis in history as
3 record numbers of people have been forced to flee vi-
4 olence and persecution, including 36,800,000 refu-
5 gees, and the United States must set the bar for a
6 global response;

7 (7) when the United States invests in refugee
8 and humanitarian protections, it stabilizes regional
9 security and encourages other countries to expand
10 access to resettlement and other pathways to protec-
11 tion; and

12 (8) processing and admission of refugees
13 through the United States Refugee Admissions Pro-
14 gram must immediately resume for all nationalities
15 under consideration for resettlement in accordance
16 with Federal law and international obligations.

17 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

18 In this Act:

19 (1) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
20 the Secretary of State.

21 (2) RECEPTION AND PLACEMENT SERVICES.—
22 The term “reception and placement services” means
23 the initial reception and placement program man-
24 aged by the Department of State that provides ini-

1 tial resettlement assistance to refugees arriving in
2 the United States, such as—

3 (A) the provision of housing, furnishings,
4 clothing, and food;

5 (B) assistance with access to medical, em-
6 ployment, educational, and social services; and

7 (C) conducting cultural and social orienta-
8 tion for recently arriving refugees.

9 (3) UNITED STATES REFUGEE ADMISSIONS
10 PROGRAM.—The term “United States Refugee Ad-
11 missions Program” means the program to resettle
12 refugees in the United States pursuant to the au-
13 thorities provided in sections 101(a)(42), 207, and
14 412 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8
15 U.S.C. 1101(a)(42), 1157, and 1522).

16 **SEC. 4. ELIGIBILITY AS REFUGEES OF SPECIAL HUMANI-**
17 **TARIAN CONCERN.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of admission as
19 a refugee under section 207 of the Immigration and Na-
20 tionality Act (8 U.S.C. 1157), refugees of special humani-
21 tarian concern eligible for processing under the United
22 States Refugee Admissions Program shall include aliens
23 referred by eligible community sponsorship groups subject
24 to the requirements of section 415 of the Immigration and
25 Nationality Act, as added by section 5.

1 (b) PROCESSING.—Not later than 90 days after the
2 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall es-
3 tablish a procedure for the United States Refugee Admis-
4 sions Program to accept and process referrals from eligible
5 community sponsorship groups.

6 (c) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—
7 Aliens referred for processing under this section shall sat-
8 isfy the requirements of section 207 of the Immigration
9 and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1157) to qualify for admis-
10 sion to the United States.

11 (d) APPLICABILITY OF NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS.—
12 Refugees admitted under this section shall not be subject
13 to the numerical limitations described in sections 202,
14 203, 204, and 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act
15 (8 U.S.C. 1152, 1153, 1154, 1157).

16 (e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
17 tion may be construed—

18 (1) to authorize the Secretary to replace or re-
19 duce federally funded reception and placement serv-
20 ices for aliens; or

21 (2) to restrict the authority of the Secretary of
22 Homeland Security to admit aliens to the United
23 States under any other Act.

1 **SEC. 5. COMMUNITY-BASED REFUGEE RECEPTION PRO-**
2 **GRAM.**

3 Chapter 2 of title IV of the Immigration and Nation-
4 ality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.) is amended by adding
5 at the end the following:

6 **“SEC. 415. COMMUNITY-BASED REFUGEE RECEPTION PRO-**
7 **GRAM.**

8 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

9 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days
10 after the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in
11 consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Secu-
12 rity and Secretary of Health and Human Services,
13 shall establish a program within the United States
14 Refugee Admission Program, to be known as the
15 ‘Community-based Refugee Reception Program’ (re-
16 ferred to in this section as the ‘Program’), which
17 shall use community sponsorship, private sponsor-
18 ship, and partnerships between resettlement agencies
19 and community groups to provide refugees with ini-
20 tial resettlement services, including reception and
21 placement with sponsors, of refugees in the United
22 States for a period of at least 90 days.

23 “(2) PROCEDURE.—The Secretary shall admin-
24 ister a procedure for accepting and approving appli-
25 cations for community sponsorship groups to partici-

1 pate in the Program, subject to requirements de-
2 scribed in subsection (c).

3 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A refugee admitted to the
5 United States is eligible to participate in the Pro-
6 gram if, pursuant to processes and procedures estab-
7 lished by the Secretary—

8 “(A) such individual has been referred to
9 the program to resettle refugees in the United
10 States pursuant to the authorities provided in
11 sections 101(a)(42), 207, and 412 by a commu-
12 nity sponsorship group that intends to provide
13 reception and placement services to the refugee
14 and any immediate relative or beneficiary of the
15 refugee; and

16 “(B) the Secretary determines such place-
17 ment is in the interest of the refugee to facili-
18 tate self-sufficiency after considering the spe-
19 cific needs of the refugee and any immediate
20 relative or beneficiary of the refugee.

21 “(2) EXCEPTION.—

22 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A refugee referred to
23 the program to resettle refugees in the United
24 States pursuant to the authorities provided in
25 sections 101(a)(42), 207, and 412 by an entity

1 other than a community sponsorship group may
2 be placed with a community sponsorship group
3 pursuant to section 415(c)(2), if the Secretary
4 determines such placement is in the interest of
5 the refugee to facilitate self-sufficiency in the
6 United States.

7 “(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining
8 eligibility under this paragraph, the Secretary
9 shall consider the specific needs of the refugee,
10 or of the immediate relatives or beneficiaries of
11 such refugee, including the availability of ac-
12 commodations for persons with disabilities.

13 “(c) COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP GROUPS.—

14 “(1) ELIGIBILITY.—Community sponsorship
15 groups that apply to participate in the Program may
16 be eligible if the Secretary determines that the group
17 has—

18 “(A) not less than 3 United States citizens
19 or lawful permanent residents who live within
20 the area where the refugee and the beneficiaries
21 of such refugee, if applicable, intend to be re-
22 settled;

23 “(B) raised sufficient funds to cover asso-
24 ciated expenses for the period of initial sponsor-
25 ship for each sponsored refugee, which shall be

1 an amount determined by the Secretary of
2 State;

3 “(C) completed all required pre-arrival
4 training as determined by the Secretary; and

5 “(D) provided all required biographic in-
6 formation of each sponsored refugee or refugees
7 of special humanitarian concern for processing
8 to the United States Refugee Admission Pro-
9 gram according to the procedures set forth by
10 the Secretary.

11 “(2) EXCEPTION.—Paragraph (1)(C) shall not
12 apply with respect to community sponsorship groups
13 that have provided consent to provide for initial re-
14 settlement for any refugee, and the immediate rel-
15 atives or beneficiaries of such refugee, determined to
16 be eligible for admission under section 207 and sub-
17 ject to the parameters provided by the community
18 sponsorship group.

19 “(3) RESPONSIBILITIES.—

20 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Community sponsor-
21 ship groups shall be responsible for providing
22 initial reception and placement services similar
23 to services provided by domestic resettlement
24 agencies and local affiliates for a refugee and
25 the immediate relatives or beneficiaries of such

1 refugee for not less than 90 days after the ad-
2 mission of such refugee, in lieu of services typi-
3 cally provided by domestic resettlement agencies
4 and local affiliates.

5 “(B) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing
6 in this paragraph shall be construed to limit
7 refugees from accessing public benefits or serv-
8 ices other than reception and placement serv-
9 ices.

10 “(d) PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP.—

11 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make
12 grants to, and enter into contracts and cooperative
13 agreements with, one or more organizations to meet
14 costs associated with training and other services ren-
15 dered to community sponsorship groups. Funds
16 under this paragraph shall be provided in coordina-
17 tion with the provision of other assistance in this
18 chapter and not in lieu of payments for any other
19 service.

20 “(2) ORGANIZATIONS.—The Secretary shall en-
21 sure that recipients of grants awarded pursuant to
22 paragraph (1) sufficiently reflect geographic diver-
23 sity and are inclusive of organizations with dem-
24 onstrated experience in employing community spon-
25 sorship models for refugee reception, veteran service

1 organizations, faith-based groups, and Private Spon-
2 sor Organizations.

3 “(3) DUTIES.—Organizations participating in
4 the cooperative agreement shall be responsible for—

5 “(A) informing implementation of the Pro-
6 gram; and

7 “(B) assisting the Secretary with devel-
8 oping—

9 “(i) mandatory training for all com-
10 munity sponsorship groups to be completed
11 prior to application to the program, which
12 shall include information on—

13 “(I) all responsibilities of the
14 community sponsorship group
15 throughout the 90-day initial resettlement
16 period and any additional duties
17 or expectations beyond such period;

18 “(II) demonstrated best practices
19 for assisting refugees to attain self-
20 sufficiency;

21 “(III) the legal rights and protec-
22 tions of refugees;

23 “(IV) the general eligibility of
24 refugees to access public benefits, in-
25 cluding cash assistance, job training,

1 language training, and other support
2 authorized under this chapter; and

3 “(V) any other requirements that
4 the Secretary determines is necessary
5 to facilitate resettlement of refugees
6 in the United States;

7 “(ii) policies that provide for con-
8 tinuity of support to refugees in the event
9 a community sponsorship group is unable
10 to fulfill its responsibilities for the entirety
11 of the 90-day initial resettlement period,
12 including procedures for providing reim-
13 bursement to resettlement agencies for
14 services provided as a result of any disrup-
15 tion in service;

16 “(iii) policies to prohibit waste, fraud,
17 and abuse by community sponsorship
18 groups; and

19 “(iv) a mechanism for refugees to
20 independently report to the Secretary—

21 “(I) any criminal or negligent ac-
22 tivity by a community sponsorship
23 group; or

24 “(II) any behavior by a commu-
25 nity sponsorship group that otherwise

1 adversely affects the ability of the ref-
2 ugee to establish independence in the
3 United States.

4 “(e) COMMUNICATION WITH STATE AND LOCAL
5 GOVERNMENTS.—Not later than 60 days after September
6 20, 2026, and not later than 60 days after the end of
7 each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to
8 representatives of State and local government, including
9 State and local health agencies where community sponsor-
10 ship groups are active, a report on current estimates of
11 the total number of—

12 “(1) refugees intended to be resettled through
13 the Program within the respective State or local ju-
14 risdiction in the fiscal year following the fiscal year
15 for which the report is being prepared;

16 “(2) community sponsorship applications re-
17 ceived from their respective jurisdiction in the pre-
18 ceding fiscal year; and

19 “(3) community sponsorship groups approved to
20 participate in the Program pending the arrival of a
21 refugee.

22 “(f) ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSISTANCE.—Nothing in this
23 section shall be interpreted to limit the access of a refugee
24 who received initial reception and placement services from
25 the Program to any assistance provided by the Office to

1 aliens authorized under section 412 or any other provision
2 of law.

3 “(g) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary may issue such
4 regulations as may be necessary or appropriate to carry
5 out the purposes of this section.

6 “(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 “(1) RECEPTION AND PLACEMENT SERVICES.—
8 The term ‘reception and placement services’ means
9 the initial reception and placement program man-
10 aged by the Department of State that provides ini-
11 tial resettlement assistance to refugees arriving in
12 the United States, such as—

13 “(A) the provision of housing, furnishings,
14 clothing, and food;

15 “(B) assistance with access to medical, em-
16 ployment, educational, and social services; and

17 “(C) conducting cultural and social ori-
18 entation for recently arriving refugees.

19 “(2) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means
20 the Secretary of State.

21 “(i) APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be
22 appropriated for fiscal year 2026 and each fiscal year
23 thereafter such sums as may be necessary to carry out
24 this section.”.

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