

114TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1615

To reform and modernize domestic refugee resettlement programs, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 18, 2015

Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. KING, and Mr. PETERS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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## A BILL

To reform and modernize domestic refugee resettlement programs, 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 “Domestic Refugee Re-  
5       settlement Reform and Modernization Act of 2015”.

6       **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7       In this Act:

8               (1) **COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION.**—The  
9       term “community-based organization” means a non-  
10      profit organization providing a variety of social,

1 health, educational and community services to a pop-  
2 ulation that includes refugees resettled into the  
3 United States.

4 (2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means  
5 the Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement  
6 in the Department of Health and Human Services.

7 (3) NATIONAL RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES.—  
8 The term “national resettlement agencies” means  
9 voluntary agencies contracting with the Department  
10 of State to provide sponsorship and initial resettle-  
11 ment services to refugees entering the United States.

12 **SEC. 3. ASSESSMENT OF REFUGEE DOMESTIC RESETTLE-**  
13 **MENT PROGRAMS.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the  
15 date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General  
16 of the United States shall conduct a study regarding the  
17 effectiveness of the domestic refugee resettlement pro-  
18 grams operated by the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

19 (b) MATTERS TO BE STUDIED.—In the study re-  
20 quired under subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall  
21 determine and analyze—

22 (1) how the Office of Refugee Resettlement de-  
23 fines self-sufficiency and integration and if these  
24 definitions adequately represent refugees’ needs in  
25 the United States;

1           (2) the effectiveness of Office of Refugee Reset-  
2           tlement programs in helping refugees to meet self-  
3           sufficiency and integration;

4           (3) technological solutions for consistently  
5           tracking secondary migration, including opportuni-  
6           ties for interagency data sharing;

7           (4) the Office of Refugee Resettlement's budg-  
8           etary resources and project the amount of additional  
9           resources needed to fully address the unmet needs of  
10          refugees with regard to self-sufficiency and integra-  
11          tion;

12          (5) the role of community-based organizations  
13          in serving refugees in areas experiencing a high  
14          number of new refugee arrivals;

15          (6) how community-based organizations can be  
16          better utilized and supported in the Federal domes-  
17          tic resettlement process;

18          (7) recertification processes for high-skilled ref-  
19          ugees, specifically considering how to decrease bar-  
20          riers for Special Immigrant Visa holders to use their  
21          skills; and

22          (8) recommended statutory changes to improve  
23          the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the domestic  
24          refugee program in relation to the matters analyzed  
25          under paragraphs (1) through (7).

1 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date  
 2 of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall  
 3 submit a report to Congress that contains the results of  
 4 the study conducted under this section.

5 **SEC. 4. REFUGEE ASSISTANCE.**

6 (a) ASSISTANCE MADE AVAILABLE TO SECONDARY  
 7 MIGRANTS.—Section 412(a)(1) of the Immigration and  
 8 Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1522(a)(1)) is amended by add-  
 9 ing at the end the following:

10 “(C) The Director shall ensure that assistance under  
 11 this section is provided to refugees who are secondary mi-  
 12 grants and meet all other eligibility requirements for such  
 13 assistance.”.

14 (b) REPORT ON SECONDARY MIGRATION.—Section  
 15 412(a)(3) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1522(a)(3)) is amended—

16 (1) by inserting “(A)” after “(3)”;

17 (2) by striking “periodic” and inserting “an-  
 18 nual”; and

19 (3) by adding at the end the following:

20 “(B) At the end of each fiscal year, the Director shall  
 21 submit a report to Congress that includes—

22 “(i) States experiencing departures and arrivals  
 23 due to secondary migration;

24 “(ii) likely reasons for migration;

1 “(iii) the impact of secondary migration on  
2 States hosting secondary migrants;

3 “(iv) the availability of social services for sec-  
4 ondary migrants in those States; and

5 “(v) unmet needs of those secondary mi-  
6 grants.”.

7 (c) AMENDMENTS TO SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING.—  
8 Section 412(c)(1)(B) of such Act (8 U.S.C.  
9 1522(c)(1)(B)) is amended—

10 (1) by inserting “a combination of—” after  
11 “based on”;

12 (2) by striking “the total number” and insert-  
13 ing the following:

14 “(i) the total number”; and

15 (3) by striking the period at the end and insert-  
16 ing the following:

17 “(ii) the total number of all other eligible popu-  
18 lations served by the Office during the period de-  
19 scribed who are residing in the State as of the be-  
20 ginning of the fiscal year; and

21 “(iii) projections on the number and nature of  
22 incoming refugees and other populations served by  
23 the Office during the subsequent fiscal year.”.

24 (d) NOTICE AND RULEMAKING.—Not later than 90  
25 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and not

1 later than 30 days before the effective date set forth in  
 2 subsection (e), the Director shall—

3 (1) issue a proposed rule for a new formula by  
 4 which grants and contracts are to be allocated pur-  
 5 suant to the amendments made by subsection (c);  
 6 and

7 (2) solicit public comment regarding such pro-  
 8 posed rule.

9 (e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by  
 10 this section shall take effect on the first day of the first  
 11 fiscal year that begins after the date of the enactment of  
 12 this Act.

13 **SEC. 5. RESETTLEMENT DATA.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall expand the Of-  
 15 fice of Refugee Resettlement’s data analysis, collection,  
 16 and sharing activities in accordance with the requirements  
 17 set forth in subsections (b) through (e).

18 (b) DATA ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL MEDICAL  
 19 CASES.—The Director shall—

20 (1) coordinate with the Centers for Disease  
 21 Control and Prevention, national resettlement agen-  
 22 cies, community-based organizations, and State ref-  
 23 ugee health programs to track national and State  
 24 trends on refugees arriving with Class A medical  
 25 conditions and other urgent medical needs;

1           (2) examine the information sharing process,  
2           from country of arrival through refugee resettlement,  
3           to determine if access to additional mental  
4           health data could—

5                   (A) help determine placements; and

6                   (B) enable agencies to better prepare to  
7           meet refugee mental health needs; and

8           (3) in collecting information under this paragraph,  
9           utilize initial refugee health screening data,  
10          including—

11                   (A) a history of severe trauma, torture,  
12           mental health symptoms, depression, anxiety,  
13           and posttraumatic stress disorder recorded during  
14           domestic and international health  
15           screenings; and

16                   (B) Refugee Medical Assistance utilization  
17           rate data.

18          (c) DATA ON HOUSING NEEDS.—The Director shall  
19          partner with State refugee programs, community-based  
20          organizations, and national resettlement agencies to collect  
21          data relating to the housing needs of refugees, including—  
22          ing—

23                   (1) the number of refugees who have become  
24           homeless; and

1           (2) the number of refugees who are at severe  
2       risk of becoming homeless.

3       (d) DATA ON REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-  
4 SUFFICIENCY.—The Director shall gather longitudinal in-  
5 formation relating to refugee self-sufficiency, integration,  
6 and employment status during the 2-year period beginning  
7 1 year after the date on which the refugees arrived in the  
8 United States.

9       (e) AVAILABILITY OF DATA.—The Director shall an-  
10 nually—

11           (1) update the data collected under this section;

12       and

13           (2) submit a report to Congress that contains  
14       the updated data.

15 **SEC. 6. GUIDANCE REGARDING REFUGEE PLACEMENT DE-**  
16 **CISIONS.**

17       (a) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of State shall  
18 provide guidance to national resettlement agencies and  
19 State refugee coordinators on consultation with local  
20 stakeholders pertaining to refugee resettlement.

21       (b) BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary of Health and  
22 Human Services, in collaboration with the Secretary of  
23 State, shall collect best practices related to the implemen-  
24 tation of the guidance on stakeholder consultation on ref-  
25 ugee resettlement from voluntary agencies and State ref-

1 ugee coordinators and disseminate such best practices to  
2 such agencies and coordinators.

3 **SEC. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

4       This Act (except for the amendments made by section  
5 4) shall take effect on the date that is 90 days after the  
6 date of the enactment of this Act.

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