

Year 2026, there are no recorded instances of a consultation occurring without at least one cabinet level official. The consultation therefore did not meet statutory requirements for an appropriate consultation. This follows multiple instances in the first Trump Administration when the Executive Branch violated the Refugee Act by failing to hold timely and meaningful consultations with Congress.

We also observe that there is no “unforeseen refugee emergency” in South Africa justifying an increase in the refugee admissions goal. Congress created a process in the Refugee Act of 1980 under which the President can increase the refugee admissions allocation when a crisis resulted in an unexpected impact on countries of first asylum or when a U.S. response would alleviate grave humanitarian concerns or promote national interests. The Senate Judiciary Committee report on the Refugee Act (S. Rept. 96-256) listed the following examples: a “sudden exodus of people from a country where there had been no refugee flow before,” “a substantial increase in the number of refugees in an area of the world where ‘normal flow’ refugees were anticipated, but urgent new numbers developed,” or “any catastrophic circumstance affecting an asylum area requiring immediate action.”

No such unforeseen emergency was described by the Administration’s briefers during the consultation or through supplemental materials. To justify the increase in refugee admissions, your designees pointed to an increase in ongoing reports of “rhetoric” attacking Afrikaners by the South African government. However, in your Executive Order issued on February 7, 2025, entitled, “Addressing Egregious Actions of the Republic of South Africa,” you cite “hateful rhetoric and government actions” by the South African government against Afrikaners—if we accept these representations as accurate, continued rhetoric was not unforeseen. Similarly, the Report to Congress on Proposed Emergency Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2026 discusses a raid by South African officials on a U.S. Refugee Processing Center. By all accounts, the U.S. government had contracted officials to work in the Center without lawful work authorization, and enforcement action against individuals working unlawfully could hardly be called unforeseen. During the consultation, your designees further admitted that South Africa’s official policies regarding Afrikaners have not changed since the previous consultation in November 2025.

By contrast, there are numerous forced displacement crises and conflicts worldwide that would justify an emergency increase in the ceiling, including, for example, in Sudan, Burma, and Haiti. During the consultation, some members raised resettlement of refugees from Iran, including religious minority community members and political dissidents. Escalating violence in South Sudan, including attacks on civilians, led 100,000 people to flee into Ethiopia in March 2026 alone. Since the November 2025 consultation, escalating violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo between the Congolese Armed Forces and M23 rebel group led more than 40,000 people to flee to Burundi in a single week. Since early March 2026, more than one million people in Lebanon, or 20 percent of the country’s population, have been internally displaced due to escalating hostilities in the Middle East.

Your designees also stated that only Afrikaners are being considered for an exception to the bar on refugee admission. On January 20, 2025, you signed Executive Order 14163, putting an indefinite pause on the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. This Executive

Order allows the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security to admit refugees to the United States on a case-by-case basis, in their discretion, but only so long as they determine that the entry of such noncitizens as refugees is in the national interest and does not pose a threat to the security or welfare of the United States. On December 19, 2025, the Secretary of State designated this authority to the Deputy Secretary, the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources, and the Under Secretary for Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Affairs, and Religious Freedom.

During the consultation, however, the designees noted that only Afrikaners are currently being excepted from the Executive Order and could not describe a process by which any other applicant for refugee admission may be considered for an exception. There were 42.5 million refugees worldwide at the end of 2025, including many who present no threat to the security or welfare of the United States, and whose admission would be in the national interest of the United States. For example, many refugees remain separated from their families in the United States. Thousands of Afghan allies remain stranded abroad after risking their lives to serve alongside our servicemembers. There are also 123,000 fully vetted refugees who were in the pipeline to come to the United States on the first day of this Administration, 12,000 of whom had their travel to the United States scheduled. During the consultation, your designees stated these refugees will remain stranded until the policy is changed. We urge you to consider additional refugees for exceptions to the ban on refugee admission under Executive Order 14163.

The U.S. refugee admissions program has been the gold standard of vetting and served as a key diplomatic tool for 46 years. The program was created by Congress with the express purpose to give “statutory meaning to our national commitment to human rights and humanitarian concerns.” Your decision only to admit as refugees members of a group favored by your Administration is a betrayal of our nation’s longstanding bipartisan commitment to serve as a safe haven for those fleeing persecution. We urge you to conduct an appropriate consultation that complies with the law and to admit refugees impacted by the emergencies described above.

Sincerely,

RICHARD J. DURBIN,
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary.
ALEX PADILLA,
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary,
Subcommittee on Border Security and
Immigration.

REMEMBERING BARNEY FRANK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Barney Frank was one of the brightest Members of Congress I have ever had the pleasure of serving with. He was smart, outrageous, colorful, and courageous. Most importantly, he was a good man. Barney passed away last month, and I would like to take a moment to recognize his lifetime of public service.

Born in Bayonne, NJ, Barney discovered his interest in government at the age of 10 watching Senate hearings on his father’s television set. Barney said in his own words: most children were interested in becoming “a cowboy, a boxer, or a puppeteer. I preferred the idea of sitting behind an impressive dais grilling colorful Mafiosi.” To feed his passion, Barney volunteered for

Adlai Stevenson’s second Presidential campaign in 1956 while he was in high school, and the next year, he arrived at Harvard University to study public policy. Barney remained in Massachusetts for 56 years, rising in the ranks of government from executive assistant to the mayor of Boston to the Halls of Congress.

Anyone who met Barney knew that he was the last person you would want to argue with. His sharp tongue and acerbic retorts were legendary, and Barney was never afraid to use his talents to defend the causes that he believed in. Fortunately for our country, his cause was often that of the disenfranchised and powerless. Elected in 1980—the same year as President Ronald Reagan—Barney fought against the Reagan administration’s attempts to cut government programs that helped working families, and he passionately defended the Legal Services Corporation, which was facing backlash for assisting the United Farm Workers. Barney’s political acumen was as strong as his intelligence, and he achieved huge success for a new congressman.

Yet Barney’s early years in the House are perhaps best remembered for his courageous decision to come out as gay at a time when LGBTQ+ people were still banned from serving in the Armed Forces or holding a security clearance. That decision took guts. No congressman had ever come out of the closet willingly before Barney, and many had warned him that doing so would jeopardize his ability to reach higher office. But Barney refused to take the easy way out, and in 1987, he became the first openly gay Member of Congress. Barney had already been a staunch advocate for gay rights long before he came out; he even introduced the first gay rights bill in Massachusetts history as a State representative in 1972, and he continued that fight long after he announced his sexuality. Barney worked to remove homophobic provisions from America’s immigration laws, advocated for funding for AIDS and HIV research and treatment, and fought passionately against the discrimination of the LGBTQ+ community at every level of government. By the time Barney left Congress, gay people were able to openly serve in the military, sodomy laws were declared unconstitutional, and hate crimes based on an individual’s sexuality were explicitly prohibited by law.

Behind Barney’s brilliant wit and courage was also a statesman who was just as comfortable crafting bipartisan compromise as he was delivering a soundbite. Barney was indispensable in picking up the pieces of our economy in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. Not only did he work with the Bush administration to prevent the crisis from deepening, but he also joined forces with Senator Christopher Dodd to pass the Dodd-Frank Act, the largest reform to Wall Street and the American financial system in the post-war era. This bill created the Consumer

Financial Protection Bureau, an Agency tasked with defending American consumers from dishonest business practices; it regulated the securities and derivatives markets that brought our Nation to financial ruin; and it increased capital requirements for banks to avoid future defaults. While Barney wished that the rules enshrined in Dodd-Frank went further in protecting Americans, it still made a meaningful difference for millions of families.

Before leaving office, Barney had one more accomplishment he was determined to achieve. On July 7, 2012, Barney married his partner Jim Ready and became the first Member of Congress to be married to a same-sex partner. I am pleased to say that while they were the first, they are no longer the only partnership in this category. While more must be done to end discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, it is worth recognizing Barney and Jim's contributions to equality in America. Loretta and I would like to offer Jim our deepest condolences for his loss.

Barney refused to allow the prejudice and bigotry of his time to define him. His courage and intelligence were an inspiration to many of his colleagues, and his legacy is still felt in Congress today. He will be missed.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH ACT

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the 80th anniversary of the National School Lunch Act. Eight decades after President Harry S. Truman signed the legislation into law, we celebrate a program that has nourished generations of American children and helped build a stronger, healthier, and more prosperous nation.

As a former public school board member, I have seen firsthand the powerful connection between nutrition and learning. Children who have access to healthy meals are better prepared to succeed in the classroom, participate in extracurricular activities, and reach their full potential. That simple truth has guided the program.

Arkansas is proud to be part of this success story. Every school day, school meal programs serve hundreds of thousands of Arkansas students, giving them access to the nutrition necessary to learn, grow, and thrive. These meals not only support academic achievement but also promote long-term health and well-being.

We have also worked to build on the success of the National School Lunch Act and extend nutrition support beyond the school year. The Hunger-Free Summer for Kids Act, signed into law in 2022, delivered the most significant modernization of summer feeding programs in more than 60 years. By permanently expanding noncongregate meal options, the law helps ensure that children in rural and underserved communities can continue receiving nutritious meals when school is out of session.

These efforts built on a long, bipartisan tradition of strengthening child

nutrition programs, including support for school breakfast programs, summer meal initiatives, and policies that connect America's farmers, ranchers, and producers with the schools that serve our children every day.

The mission of the National School Lunch Act remains as important as ever. The program continues to nourish children in Arkansas and all across the country and invest in the future of our Nation.

Eighty years of feeding hungry students, supporting families, and creating opportunities for success is a record worth celebrating. I look forward to building on that legacy for generations to come.

TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL WILKINSON

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor an exemplary leader, dedicated public servant, and distinguished soldier: Brigadier General Scott D. Wilkinson. Since 2024, General Wilkinson has served as both military deputy chief of legislative liaison and as chief of legislative liaison. In these roles, he has helped maintain strong relations between military and congressional leaders, ensuring that Congress is well informed of our Armed Forces' critical missions. He brought a wealth of experience to these positions, having previously served as chief of the Senate liaison division.

Throughout his time working with Congress, he has demonstrated a commitment to our national security that has remained constant throughout his more than 30 years of military service. He deployed in support of Operations JOINT ENDEAVOR and JOINT GUARD in Bosnia-Herzegovina; to Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE in Eastern Europe; and to combat in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM, FREEDOM SENTINEL, IRAQI FREEDOM, INHERENT RESOLVE, and YUKON SCEPTER. His awards include the Legion of Merit with three bronze oakleaf clusters, the Bronze Star Medal with four bronze oakleaf clusters, and the Meritorious Service Medal with silver oakleaf cluster, among numerous other decorations.

Tennessee is lucky to call General Wilkinson one of our own. He served for many years at Fort Campbell, ultimately assuming the positions of commander of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and deputy commander for Support of the 101st Airborne Division. Prior to his service in the legislative liaison office, he most recently served as commanding general of the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command. Throughout his assignments, his exemplary leadership has set a standard worthy of recognition and emulation by the soldiers he led and mentored.

As General Wilkinson's time at the Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison comes to a close, I extend my deepest thanks to General Wilkinson, his wife

Mindy, and their family for their extraordinary service and sacrifice to our Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SENIOR AIRMAN LARRY THOMAS

• Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, in addition to accepting the call to serve our Nation's military, many of our veterans have also accepted an even higher calling: being a parent. But what is more is many of them were also influenced to serve by their own parents. That is true for Senior Airman Larry Thomas of Eufaula, AL. As the son of a WWI veteran and the brother of a WWII veteran, when the call to join arms came for Larry, he knew he had to do his part and join the Air Force.

Larry took time off from earning his education at Auburn University to valiantly serve the United States when we needed it the most. He spent 4 years in the early 60s at Eglin Air Force Base in northwest Florida serving our country at the onset of the Vietnam war. During those four years, he supported flight operations and even earned a Presidential Unit Citation for his squadron's help in the first-ever human orbit around the earth in 1962.

But finishing his degree was always in the back of his mind, especially after he met and married his late wife Jean, who was a lifelong educator herself. Larry and Jean married in Walton County, FL, and welcomed home their first two of three sons Channing and Sean while there. After Larry left the Air Force, he kept his promise both to himself and his wife and finished his degree; he graduated from Troy in 1969 exactly 10 years after his high school graduation. The Thomas family finally relocated back to Larry's roots in Eufaula and welcomed their third son Derek in the 70s. And Larry has never left. He went on to work in various roles in textile mills, sales, and more over the next three decades, all the while instilling many of the values he learned from the Air Force in his sons. Whether it be discipline, decision making, keeping your word, working hard, or maintaining order, Larry's time in the uniform was not confined to himself but a shared bond between all the Thomas boys.

To Larry, being a good father, husband, and grandfather is the most important role he has ever had—and his time in the military helped shape him into a father. After retiring in 2011, he has stayed involved in the Eufaula community by serving on the board of directors of the Eufaula Housing Authority and as a part of the vestry at St. James Episcopal Church. He is truly a pillar of his community, but more importantly, of his family.

In June, we celebrate Father's Day. We appreciate the fathers—like Larry—who have helped instill patriotism in the next generation. It is my