



GRACE Act Advocacy Toolkit

America's legacy as a safe haven for persecuted people is under threat as the administration has committed to welcome the smallest number of refugees yet. But there is a solution: the GRACE Act will restore America's bipartisan refugee admissions program, but only if Congress acts now. This toolkit suggests five ways you can take action to ensure Congress endorses and enacts the GRACE Act this year!

What's happening?

- On September 26, 2019 the Trump administration announced that the U.S. will aim to admit just 18,000 refugees in Fiscal Year 2020, the lowest goal in the history of the bipartisan U.S. Refugee Admissions Program by far.
- Congress has the power to restore admissions to regular levels through the Guaranteed Refugee Admissions Ceiling Enhancement (GRACE) Act.



Why is the GRACE Act important?

- The GRACE Act will ensure the U.S. aims to admit at least 95,000 refugees annually, the average goal since 1980.
- It will also ensure the administration is held accountable to welcome refugees by increasing transparency through regular reporting on refugee admissions to Congress.
- The GRACE Act demonstrates America's commitment to welcoming refugees, sending a strong signal both to displaced people around the world and to the countries hosting them that we will not turn our backs on persecuted people.

Why 95k, and why now?

- Democratic and Republican presidents alike over the last forty years have set an average goal of admitting 95,000 refugees annually.
- We are in the midst of an unprecedented global refugee crisis affecting nearly 26 million people.
- Refugee resettlement is a lifeline for less than one percent of the world's refugee population.
- Welcoming refugees saves lives and demonstrates America's support for people fleeing persecution by providing safe haven to those most in need of protection.
- In the face of this historic crisis, the Trump Administration has repeatedly reduced the refugee admissions goal to unprecedented lows; it now stands at just 18,000, the lowest goal ever.

What you can do!

- Congress needs to hear your support for the GRACE Act and welcoming 95k refugees next year.
- This toolkit provides a range of ways you can take action in support of refugees:
 1. Call your [Member of Congress](#) to ask them to co-sponsor the GRACE Act
 2. Sign the IRC's [95k for 95k petition](#)
 3. Spread the word on social media
 4. Write Op/Eds
 5. Write Letters to the Editor

1. Call Your Member of Congress

Calling your representative is the most direct way to make your support known for refugees and the GRACE Act. Members of Congress track calls, letting them know how constituents feel on the issues and helping to shape their actions on key legislation. Every call made to your Representative will let them know that we support refugees and need their commitment to preserving the refugee resettlement program and protecting vulnerable people from persecution now more than ever.

How to Call

- Find out if your Member of Congress supports the GRACE Act [here](#)
 - If they have already co-sponsored, great! A ‘thank you’ is always appreciated by offices.
 - If they have not yet co-sponsored, tell them they should!
- Go to <https://www.rescue.org/act> to sign up and receive a phone call connecting you to your Member of Congress

Sample Calling Script

Hi, my name is ____ and I'm a constituent from _____. I am calling to ask the Representative to support the GRACE Act, which establishes a minimum number of refugees who will be resettled in the U.S. each year in keeping with historic norms. I strongly believe we need to uphold America's legacy of welcoming refugees, and I hope the Representative does too. Thank you.

Tips for Calling Congress

- Start by identifying yourself: in addition to being good phone protocol, this reinforces that you are a constituent to offices that often track zip codes to ensure they are hearing voters' perspectives on the issues.
- Next, say what you are calling about and express a clear position: this helps prepare the staffer for your message and lets them know you support the GRACE Act and want their boss to support it too.
- Next, offer the *why*. Sharing a personal story or anecdote to explain why you support welcoming refugees will strengthen your argument and make your call stand out among the hundreds of calls many offices receive in a day. For example:
 - As a military veteran, I saw firsthand the important role our interpreters played in keeping us safe and want to make sure they are offered safety in the U.S.
 - As a business owner, I know firsthand the positive role that my refugee employees play in my business and in supporting our economy.
 - As the daughter of refugees, I wouldn't be here if it weren't for the lifesaving U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.
- Finally, end by thanking the staffer for their time. Always be polite and courteous – they are often on the receiving end of irate calls from other constituents so a friendly call will go a long way to ensuring your message gets heard.
- During particularly busy times, you may get connected to voicemail – don't hang up! Staffers listen to their voicemail so leave a message expressing your support for the GRACE Act.



2. Sign the 95k for 95k Petition

Go to <https://help.rescue.org/secure/org-95k-for-95k> to sign, then share with your friends and family!

As part of our advocacy efforts for the GRACE Act, the IRC is gathering the signatures of 95,000 people from across the country who support welcoming at least 95,000 refugees annually. We will share this petition with Members of Congress and the administration to demonstrate the powerful level of public support for refugees.



95k for 95k

I'm proud of America's legacy as a safe haven for generations of people escaping persecution.

Right now, more people have been forced to flee their homes than any other time in history — including World War 2.

We can't turn our backs on them.

I call on our nation's leaders to do everything possible to ensure that the U.S. upholds its historic commitments by welcoming at least 95,000 refugees annually

3. Spread the Word on Social Media

The following are some suggested posts for your social media accounts, but feel free to be creative! The most important thing is to express your personal passion for welcoming refugees. You can find graphics to share here: <https://rescue.box.com/s/f00rjekmr8mwnvjaoebp05m5cjc7zd7x>

Invite your friends to sign the petition:

- Say it loud. Say it clear. Refugees are welcome here. The US has just slashed the number of refugees they are welcoming this year. I join @RESCUEorg in calling on Congress to demand we admit at least 95,000 vulnerable refugees per year, the historic average goal: <https://help.rescue.org/secure/org-95k-for-95k>
- There are more refugees now than any other time in history. We can't turn our backs on them. I'm proud of America's legacy as a safe haven- and call on U.S. leaders to welcome at least 95,000 refugees annually, the historic average goal. Join me and @RESCUEorg: <https://help.rescue.org/secure/org-95k-for-95k>
- Refugee resettlement is an essential lifeline that the U.S. provides for the *most vulnerable* refugees. With the administration slashing admissions, Congress has the power to act & uphold America's legacy. Join me & @RESCUEorg. Take action today: <https://help.rescue.org/secure/org-95k-for-95k>
- The Trump Administration will drastically cut the number of refugees allowed into the U.S. next year to 18,000—but Congress has the power to act. Join @RESCUEorg in calling for America to uphold its legacy as a safe haven: <https://help.rescue.org/secure/org-95k-for-95k>

Invite friends to call their Members of Congress:

- America has always been a safe haven for persecuted people, but with the recent decision to slash refugee admissions to historic lows, that legacy is at risk. Congress has the power to act. Join @RESCUEorg - call today & tell them to support the GRACE Act: <https://www.rescue.org/take-action/ask-your-representative-co-sponsor-grace-act>
- I just called and asked my Member of Congress to stand up for refugees by supporting the GRACE Act. Join me & @RESCUEorg: <https://www.rescue.org/take-action/ask-your-representative-co-sponsor-grace-act>

Invite friends to find out more about refugee resettlement:

- Why should the U.S. take in more refugees? Get the facts on the refugee cap and why @RESCUEorg is calling for a minimum of 95,000 refugees to be welcomed in the U.S. every year: <https://www.rescue.org/article/why-should-america-take-more-refugees-get-facts-refugee-cap>
- The Trump Administration will drastically cut the number of refugees allowed into the U.S. next year to 18,000 —but Congress has the power to act. Here's why a low refugee admissions number in the U.S. won't suffice - must-read by @RESCUEorg: <https://www.rescue.org/article/why-should-america-take-more-refugees-get-facts-refugee-cap>

Inspire people to act through stories of their refugee neighbors:

- "Leaving your home is not a luxury, it's a necessity for refugees." Qais received a special immigrant visa for locals in Afghanistan who worked with the US government. Today, safe in Seattle, he is a caseworker with @RESCUEorg. His #RefugeesWelcome story: <https://www.rescue.org/article/helping-refugees-my-way-giving-back-country-welcomed-me>
- Meet five new Americans and former refugees who, after escaping conflict and rebuilding their lives, are now standing up to make other #RefugeesWelcome. Inspiring story from @RESCUEorg at a time when refugee resettlement in the U.S. is being slashed: <https://www.rescue.org/article/refugees-call-congress-fight-welcome>

4. Write Op-Eds

Op-Eds are another powerful tool to influence the discourse in your community. Like Letters to the Editor, they are a great way to encourage your Members of Congress to support the GRACE Act, but offer you more space to share personal stories, statistics, or other information to demonstrate the importance of upholding America's tradition of welcoming refugees.

Op-Ed Tips:

- Be Concise - while op-eds typically have a longer word limit than Letters to the Editor (usually between 500-1000 words), if you can express your idea powerfully and succinctly in 400 words, don't write 800.
- Be Personal - sharing your story and identifying your stake in this issue (as a faith leader, a business owner, a veteran, a former refugee, the children of refugees, etc.) will help the reader to relate to your message
- Be Specific - giving a shout-out to the importance of the GRACE Act will help spread the word and encourage support
- Be Relevant – linking national developments to local concerns will set your Op-Ed apart from other submissions

Sample Arguments to Make in your Op-Ed

Refugee Resettlement is a lifeline that the US provides for the most vulnerable refugees at a time of unprecedented global crisis

- The majority of refugees are hosted in developing countries; resettlement is a relatively modest – yet lifesaving – way for America to demonstrate its support for people fleeing persecution and the countries hosting them.
- Resettlement also upholds America's commitment for the interpreters, translators, cultural advisors, and others who have risked their lives to support U.S. military and diplomatic missions abroad, many of whom have since been targeted for this support.
- Welcoming refugees sets a positive example for other countries to follow, helping to ensure pro-refugee policies in countries hosting the majority of refugees, thereby discouraging premature and unsafe return that only further cycles of violence, instability, and displacement.
- In September, 27 retired senior U.S. military leaders wrote an unprecedented letter to President Trump, highlighting the importance of resettlement to America's national security and urging him to commit to welcoming at least 95,000 refugees over the coming year.

Refugees strengthen the economy

- While the primary purpose of refugee resettlement is humanitarian, it also has positive economic effects.
- Refugees revitalize cities and towns across America.
- Refugees contribute more in taxes over the course of their first 20 years in the US than they receive in benefits
- Refugees are reliable and enthusiastic employees: they have a 7-15% [lower turnover rate](#) than the overall workforce in key industries.
- Refugees are also job creators, with [entrepreneurship rates](#) nearly 30% higher than among the US-born population.

Welcoming refugees is who we are as Americans

- Resettlement is a bipartisan tradition: Democratic and Republican presidents have on average committed to welcoming an average of 95,000 refugees annually.
- America has always welcomed people from around the world who yearn for the chance to rebuild their lives in safety, freedom, and dignity.
- Welcoming refugees sends a powerful signal to the world about America's values of tolerance and acceptance.
- In the 40 years since the Refugee Admissions Program was established, the U.S. has welcomed more than 3 million refugees from around the world.

5. Write Letters to the Editor

Members of Congress read their local papers, so Letters to the Editor (LTEs) are a great way to share your concerns about the low refugee admissions and demonstrate that as a constituent you want your elected officials to support the GRACE Act.

Letter Tips:

- Set an appropriate tone - highlight the positive contributions of refugees in your life and community
- Be Local - while responding to national news, focus on the relevance to your city/state
- Be Brief - check your target paper's guidelines; most require just 150 to 250 words
- Be Timely - responding to a recent article from the outlet will increase your chances of publication
- Be Determined – submit to a paper that you read; if the letter isn't picked up, try again with another paper!

Sample Letter to the Editor:

[Date]

Dear Editor:

I was shocked by the news that the administration will welcome no more than 18,000 refugees in the coming year ["headline of article you are referencing"]. At a time of unprecedented need, this is a historic low and a violation of our nation's long tradition of providing safe haven to persecuted people.

Republican and Democratic presidents alike have committed to welcoming an average of 95,000 refugees a year for the last four decades. With nearly 26 million refugees around the world, the U.S. should be doing more, not less to welcome people fleeing for their lives. [City/State] has a long tradition of welcoming refugees, who have gone on to become our teachers, doctors, business owners, neighbors, and friends.

Fortunately, there is a solution. Congress is currently considering the GRACE Act, which would restore the refugee admissions program to normal levels. Our elected officials must pass the GRACE Act now and uphold America's legacy of welcome.

[Name]

[Address with city/state/zip]

[Email address]

[Phone number]