

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

2138 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6216

(202) 225-6906
judiciary.house.gov

July 24, 2024

Ms. Robin Dunn Marcos
Director
Office of Refugee Resettlement
Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Ms. Dunn Marcos:

The Committee on the Judiciary continues to conduct oversight of the Biden-Harris Administration's enforcement of federal immigration law and its implementation of policies that prioritize illegal aliens and refugees over U.S. citizens and other legal residents. This oversight includes the Committee's examination of the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). We write to request information about HHS ORR's coordination with the State Department and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to use taxpayer dollars to pay for housing assistance for refugees and other aliens.

The Biden-Harris economy has left many Americans struggling to become homeowners. According to one report, "America is short around 3.2 million homes," with insufficient housing "to keep up with the increase in households."¹ The situation is now "the toughest housing market in a generation."² In addition, "[h]alf of renters in the United States have found themselves paying more than they can afford, following years of surging rents."³ At the same time, the Biden-Harris Administration has released into the United States at least 5.3 million illegal

¹ Sami Sparber, *America's housing shortage explained in one chart*, AXIOS (Dec. 16, 2023), <https://www.axios.com/2023/12/16/housing-market-why-homes-expensive-chart-inventory>.

² Bryan Mena, *An affordability crisis is making some young Americans give up on ever owning a home*, CNN (Feb. 3, 2024, 9:23 AM), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/03/economy/young-americans-giving-up-owning-a-home/index.html>.

³ Anna Bahney, *Half of US tenants can't afford to pay their rent. Here's what's ahead*, CNN (Jan. 30, 2024, 4:04 PM), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/30/economy/rent-prices-dropping-2024-apartments/index.html>.

aliens,⁴ with at least 1.9 million known “gotaways” escaping into the country.⁵ The Biden-Harris Administration is focused on funneling as many foreign nationals into the United States as possible, including with a refugee resettlement goal of 125,000 in fiscal year 2024 alone.⁶

While Americans struggle to buy homes and pay their rent,⁷ the Biden-Harris Administration has sought to ensure that refugees and other aliens can find affordable housing once they arrive in the United States. In fact, HHS ORR works alongside HUD and the State Department to connect refugees and other aliens with housing assistance. On its website, for example, HUD refers to refugees and other so-called “newcomer populations” as “new Americans” and describes its desire to allow these individuals to “find safe, permanent, and affordable housing by providing access to housing counseling and sharing important resources regarding HUD programs and services.”⁸ In August 2023, HUD and HHS ORR signed a memorandum of understanding “to facilitate equitable access to HUD-assisted resources for ORR-served populations through partnership, outreach, education[,] and technical assistance.”⁹

At a briefing for Congressional staff on June 21, 2024, a State Department official noted how a lack of affordable housing and a weak job market have limited the Biden-Harris Administration’s ability to bring additional refugees into the United States.¹⁰ During the same briefing, an HHS ORR official told staff, “Housing is one of the main challenges for new arriving populations.”¹¹ To assist with these apparent challenges, HUD offers a “subsidized housing toolkit” for “[r]efugees and [h]umanitarian [p]arolees seeking rental assistance or other housing help.”¹²

⁴ See H. Comm. on the Judiciary, Rep. on The Biden Border Crisis: How the Biden Admin. Opened the Sw. Border and Abandoned Interior Immigr. Enf’t at App’x 1 (Oct. 9, 2023); U.S. Customs and Border Prot., *Custody and Transfer Statistics FY 2023*, U.S. DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC. (last accessed Mar. 22, 2024); U.S. Customs and Border Prot., *Custody and Transfer Statistics FY 2024*, U.S. DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC. (last accessed June 25, 2024); Camilo Montoya-Galvez, *Biden administration has admitted more than 1 million migrants into U.S. under parole policy Congress is considering restricting*, CBS NEWS (Jan. 22, 2024); *Latest UC Data, Total Monthly Discharges to Individual Sponsors Only*, U.S. DEP’T OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVS. (last accessed Mar. 22, 2024); Off. of Refugee Resettlement, *Unaccompanied Children Released to Sponsors by State*, U.S. DEP’T OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVS. (last accessed June 25, 2024); U.S. Customs and Border Prot., *CBP Releases May 2024 Monthly Update*, U.S. DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC. (June 20, 2024); Immigr. and Customs Enf’t, *Daily SWB Placemat*, U.S. DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC. (Apr. 2023–June 2024) (on file with Comm.); Off. of Homeland Sec. Statistics, *Immigr. Enf’t and Legal Processes Monthly Tables – Feb. 2024*, U.S. DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC. (last accessed June 25, 2024).

⁵ Casey Harper, *Border crisis creates national security threat for U.S., observers say*, WASH. EXAMINER (Aug. 7, 2023); Bill Melugin (@BillMelugin_), X (June 20, 2024, 10:22 AM).

⁶ Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, *Strengthening the USRAP*, U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, <https://www.state.gov/refugee-admissions/strengthening-the-usrap/> (last accessed June 25, 2024).

⁷ Mena, *supra* note 2.

⁸ Off. of Field Pol’y and Mgmt., *Refugee and Other Newcomer Populations*, U.S. DEP’T OF HOUS. AND URB. DEV., https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/field_policy_mgt/refugees (last accessed June 25, 2024).

⁹ Memorandum of Understanding between Off. of Refugee Resettlement, U.S. Dep’t of Health and Human Servs., and Off. of Field Pol’y and Mgmt., U.S. Dep’t of Hous. and Urb. Dev. (Aug. 4, 2023), available at https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FPM/documents/HUD-FPM_and_ORR_MOU_signed.pdf.

¹⁰ U.S. Refugee Admissions Program Briefing to Comm. staff (June 21, 2024).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Subsidized Housing Toolkit*, U.S. DEP’T OF HOUS. AND URB. DEV., https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FPM/documents/Toolkit_HUD_Programs.pdf (last accessed June 25, 2024).

Given the nation's housing crisis posed by the failing Biden-Harris economy and the Biden-Harris Administration's facilitation of additional alien entries into the country, the Committee is conducting oversight over HHS ORR's apparent prioritization of refugees, parolees, and other aliens over U.S. citizens and other legal residents. Accordingly, to assist the Committee with its continued oversight of federal immigration policy and procedures, we ask that you provide the following information:

1. All documents and communications between or among HHS ORR and the State Department, HUD, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), or any of their component entities, referring or relating to housing assistance for refugees, parolees, and other aliens, for the period January 20, 2021, to the present;
2. All documents and communications between or among HHS ORR and the State Department, HUD, DHS, or any of their component entities, referring or relating to Church World Service's Refugee Housing Solutions, including but not limited to all cooperative agreements and memoranda, for the period January 20, 2021, to the present;
3. All documents and communications between or among HHS ORR and Church World Service referring or relating to housing for refugees, parolees, and other aliens, for the period January 20, 2021, to the present;
4. The number of aliens, disaggregated by immigration status, that HHS ORR has referred to HUD for housing assistance, the number of aliens who have received housing assistance, and the amount of money spent on such referrals and assistance since January 20, 2021; and
5. HHS ORR's eligibility criteria for referral to HUD and the receipt of housing assistance, including the categories of aliens for which such referral and assistance is available.

Please provide the information requested as soon as possible but no later than 5:00 p.m. on August 7, 2024. Pursuant to the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to conduct oversight of federal immigration policy and procedures.¹³ If you have any questions, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-6906.

¹³ Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, R. X (2023).

Ms. Robin Dunn Marcos

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Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jim Jordan
Chairman



Tom McClintock
Chairman
Subcommittee on Immigration
Integrity, Security, and Enforcement

cc: The Honorable Jerrold L. Nadler, Ranking Member

The Honorable Pramila Jayapal, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration
Integrity, Security, and Enforcement