



May 4, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader Schumer, and Leader McConnell:

As Congress considers the President's Fiscal Year 2022 emergency supplemental funding request from April 28, 2022, we write on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration and Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) to express our strong support for additional humanitarian assistance for those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, as well as to convey our views on several other urgent priorities.

We welcome the broad bipartisan support for Ukrainians fleeing violence and destruction in their homeland, and we are committed to assisting with the United States' holistic response. The USCCB and Catholic Charities agencies across the country have long played an instrumental role in welcoming those seeking refuge and helping them to integrate effectively within American communities. As one of our country's nine national refugee resettlement agencies, the USCCB's Department of Migration and Refugee Services works closely with federal, state, and local partners to ensure that those resettled in the United States have the means to sustain themselves long-term and contribute to our society.

It is based on this experience that we request Congress to authorize those paroled into the United States through the Uniting for Ukraine program to receive the full range of benefits and services available to those who have formal refugee status. These include employment services, access to health care, assistance registering children for school, and language services, among others. Given the private sponsorship component of Uniting for Ukraine, some beneficiaries may not require most or any of the services normally offered to refugees. However, ensuring access to these support services will maximize opportunities for each beneficiary to thrive while in the United States and account for gaps in technical expertise possessed by their sponsors. Our organizations have already encountered Ukrainians seeking resettlement assistance, including those who were granted parole at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Additional funding is also required to support reception and integration efforts for those displaced by the war in Ukraine and relocated to the United States. While we appreciate the President's

requested amount for the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), we recommend that \$3 billion in supplemental funding be appropriated to ORR and \$2.2 billion to the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). We further request \$340 million for the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to enable it to implement the Uniting for Ukraine program and adjudicate refugee applications without undermining the processing of other benefits under its purview, such as religious worker visas and employment authorizations.

In addition, we affirm the continued need for Congress to enact legislation that would streamline the process for Afghan nationals to pursue permanent legal status in the United States. Without this, thousands of Afghans who served the United States faithfully and their family members will be in danger of accruing unlawful presence, losing work authorization, and facing removal, perhaps even back to the same life-threatening conditions they fled. An adjustment act would provide certainty for our new Afghan neighbors and their communities, while also upholding the commitment our country made to members of this population. We ask you to include this legislation as part of a supplemental funding bill. Congress should also consider offering a pathway to permanent legal status for displaced Ukrainians who may ultimately seek to remain in the United States.

Inherent in these requests is justification for a renewed commitment to the Refugee Admissions Program, which has successfully leveraged public-private partnership for decades to make the United States a global leader in refugee resettlement. The program should be improved and expanded to allow for a more rapid response to displacement crises like the conflict in Ukraine without undermining its core commitment to refugees from around the world. This will reduce the current reliance on humanitarian parole and other measures that fail to promote full integration. Congress must also exercise its oversight authority to ensure the program is fully functioning as intended, including mechanisms for family reunification.

Finally, we [remain](#) opposed to any efforts to prolong the misuse of Title 42 of the U.S. Code (42 U.S.C. §§ 265, 268) to deny asylum seekers access to humanitarian protections long enshrined in U.S. law.

Pope Francis has described ongoing events in Ukraine as “a macabre regression of humanity.” Together with the Holy Father, we pray for an end to the violence in Ukraine and for a just peace to prevail. In the meantime, we encourage you to ensure that the United States remains a generous and welcoming nation in the face of this and other tragedies. Thank you for your consideration of our views on these important matters.

Sincerely,



Most Reverend Mario E. Dorsonville
Auxiliary Bishop of Washington
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration



Sister Donna Markham, OP, Ph.D.
President and CEO
Catholic Charities USA

CC: All Representatives and Senators