

**Summary of the Strengthening Refugee Resettlement Act**  
Representative Keith Ellison

**Section 1: Short Title**

The Strengthening Refugee Resettlement Act

**Section 2: Security Checks**

Expresses the sense of Congress that the federal agencies who are involved in refugee processing (including the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State) should conduct a study of overseas refugee processing to determine ways to streamline the process, while maintaining thorough security vetting.

**Section 3: Pre-Arrival Orientation and English as a Second Language Training**

Directs the Department of State to establish overseas refugee training programs, including English as a Second Language classes and work orientation training for those refugees approved to be admitted to the United States. These programs would need to occur within the normal refugee processing times and not delay the departure of refugees who have been approved to go to the United States.

**Section 4: Admit Refugees as Permanent Residents**

Allows refugees (along with their spouses and children) to be admitted to the United States as lawful permanent residents. This section also allows asylum seekers to be granted lawful permanent residency and provides for spouses and children to receive the same status.

**Section 5: Update Reception and Placement Grants**

Requires that the Department of State, when setting the amount of Reception and Placement Grants, adjust the grant amount to account for initial refugee resettlement needs, including amounts for inflation and costs of living. In addition, this section requires the Department of State to ensure that funding is provided to national resettlement agencies at the beginning of the fiscal year to serve the initial resettlement needs of refugees.

**Section 6: Coordinator of Refugee Program Agencies**

Expresses the sense of Congress that the President should appoint a White House coordinator to coordinate and address refugee protection issues across federal agencies.

**Section 7: Case Management**

Establishes a grant program for the creation of a case management system to assist refugees in accessing services and benefits for which they are eligible. Case management would generally be available to refugees from the time they are eligible for resettlement assistance until one year after they are no longer eligible to receive resettlement assistance. In exceptional circumstances, case

management can be provided for up to three years after refugees are no longer eligible to receive resettlement assistance.

### **Section 8: Increase in Cash Payments**

Requires the Office of Refugee Resettlement to provide a minimum of twelve months of cash payments, subject to available appropriations.

### **Section 9: Refugee Integration Grants**

Establishes a grant program to aid with refugee integration. These grants would be provided to help refugees integrate into civic life in the United States and can be used for such needs as housing, employment recertification, transportation, employment training, child care, and mental health services.

### **Section 10: Matching Grant Program Expansion**

Expands eligibility for and participation in the Matching Grant Program. The Matching Grant Program is an existing public-private partnership that is an alternative to public cash assistance, in which services are provided to eligible refugees to become economically self-sufficient within 120 to 180 days.

### **Section 11: Emergency Refugee Resettlement Fund**

Creates a domestic emergency refugee resettlement fund to meet unanticipated refugee resettlement needs, including increased numbers of arrivals due to secondary migration. These funds can be used for such needs as housing, transportation, health, employment, English as a Second Language training, and employment recertification.

### **Section 12: Supplemental Security Income Benefits**

Restores permanent eligibility of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for refugees and asylum seekers. Generally, SSI, modest monthly assistance, expires for refugees and asylees after seven years if these individuals are unable to become U.S. citizens in that timeframe. The naturalization process presents considerable challenges to the seniors and persons with disabilities whom SSI is intended to assist.

### **Section 13: Make Special Immigrant Juvenile Status Beneficiaries & Unaccompanied Children Granted U Visa Protection Eligible for Refugee Benefits**

Makes children who are granted U visas (immigration relief available to individuals who are victims of serious crimes and collaborate with law enforcement on the prosecution of those crimes) eligible for services of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program. The program currently provides specialized care to vulnerable migrant child populations such as Unaccompanied Refugee Minors, Special Immigrant Juveniles, child victims of human trafficking, and children granted asylum.