

# Human Rights First

## Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

<https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/press-release/secure-and-succeed-act-holds-dreamers-hostage-punishes-asylum-seekers>

## Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Work With Asylum Seekers

If you are seeking asylum, we can help

Areas of Focus

Current Initiatives

**Washington, D.C.** Human Rights First today condemned introduction of the Secure and Succeed Act, calling the legislation a cruel attempt to punish asylum seekers and migrants through the use of prolonged detention and criminal prosecutions. The legislation, which comes amid a heated debate on immigration on the Senate floor, was introduced by a coalition of senators led by Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA). Human Rights First calls on senators from both sides of the aisle to deny passage of the legislation and reaffirm the U.S. commitment to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Grassley and this administration are attempting to fool the American people into believing that punishing the most vulnerable refugee families and blocking them from protection in the United States will somehow make us safer. It is a farce and an assault on the very principles of our asylum system, said Human Rights First's Jennifer Quigley. It further holds hostage Dreamers at the expense of asylum seekers who are only trying to escape grave threat to their lives and the lives of their families.

The legislation proposes a path to citizenship for approximately 1.8 million Dreamers although restrictive language in the bill indicates that thousands would be excluded in exchange for massive increases in so-called border security. The legislation, comprised of provisions based on President Trump's immigration framework, would introduce a number of provisions that would prove detrimental for asylum seekers and refugees.

The Secure and Succeed Act would authorize funds to increase the number of criminal prosecutions for unlawful border crossing in each sector of the southern border by 80 percent per day compared to the year prior to the bill's enactment. Immigration prosecutions are already over half of the cases moving through the federal criminal justice system, tearing apart parents and children and punishing asylum seekers. The legislation would further expand mandatory detention for broad classes of noncitizens without regard to their claims for humanitarian protection or individualized risk factors. It also provides the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with expanded power to detain noncitizens and makes release on bond more difficult by raising the minimum bond amount far out of the reach of many asylum seekers. Detention is traumatizing, punitive, and inhibits access to counsel which is critical to pursuing a case for asylum or other relief.

Additionally, the Secure and Safe Act curtails legal representation of asylum seekers by prohibiting continuances necessary to secure an attorney and federal subsidization of legal representation, despite statistics confirming that counsel is critical to establishing eligibility. It further eliminates a requirement that judges warn asylum seekers against frivolous filings and penalizes those who cannot read warning forms written in English. Making a bad system worse, it would also expand harms from the asylum filing deadline which already blocks refugees with well-founded fears from asylum by decreasing it down to 6 months and further restricting already overly narrow exceptions.

Human Rights First calls on Congress to pass the bipartisan DREAM Act and not give in to anti-refugee voices who want to abandon this country's leadership and ideals. The Trump Administration should stop targeting refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable children for harsh treatment.

Taking an extremist view of immigration is not only unnecessary as our system is replete with safeguards against fraud and abuse but it is cruel. Asylum and due process are core American ideals, they're not loopholes, added Quigley.

Published on February 13, 2018

Share

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

2017 Pro Bono Stars: Houston

Blog

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

Joint Letter to President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas & AG Garland on Title 42

Letter

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

360 Videos Document Life for Asylum Seekers at U.S. Border

Press

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

5 Ways To Help Migrant Parents And Children At The Border

Blog

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

5th Circuit Amicus Brief in State of Texas, State of Missouri v Biden: HRF Opposes MPP on the Merits

Amicus Briefs

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

A life in safety would not mean anything if my children were not here with me: Joys and Trauma Persist for Refugees Separated from Their Families

Letter

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

A Second Chance for Detained Asylum Seekers in Jennings v. Rodriguez

Blog

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

A Shameful Record: Biden Administrations Use of Trump Policies Endangers People Seeking Asylum

Reports

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

A Sign of Desperation: Syrian Refugees are Selling Their Organs

Blog

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

A Sordid Scheme: The Trump Administrations Illegal Return of Asylum Seekers to Mexico

Reports

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

A Sordid Scheme: The Trump Administrations Illegal Return of Asylum Seekers to Mexico

Reports

Systemic Injustice-Refugee Protection

A Year After Del Rio, Haitian Asylum Seekers Expelled Under Title 42 Are Still Suffering

Letter

Urge Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act

Human Rights First is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3). We do not favor or oppose any candidate for public office.