

Human Rights First

Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

<https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/press-release/presidents-budget-would-damage-asylum-system-undermine-state-department>

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 called on Congress to reject President Trump's budget proposals, which target refugees and asylum seekers, and would drastically reduce funding to promote human rights and prevent conflict around the world. Submitted to Congress today, the president's proposed budget would increase border and immigration enforcement funding, including an expansion of immigration detention and the construction of a wall on the southern border. It would also cut funding to the State Department and USAID by roughly 23 percent, greatly harming American diplomacy in an era of rising global threats to democracy and human rights.

When it comes to immigration, the president's proposed budget is a master class in misplaced priorities. Not only is it an inhumane proposal, it doesn't address the actual needs of those at the border, said Human Rights First's Jennifer Quigley. Instead of freeing incarcerated families, President Trump seeks to have more join them. We should be allocating funds for more personnel to handle asylum cases, not building walls and jail cells.

The president's budget calls for increased funding for immigration enforcement and border security, including funding that would lead to increased detention of asylum seekers and additional barriers to asylum. This includes expanding immigration detention capacity to 60,000, with a specific call for ten thousand additional beds for family detention, and the hiring of thousands of additional Department of Homeland Security officials. Predictably, of the new hires, only a minuscule amount will be at ports of entry, where staff are actually needed.

Today's proposal would also restructure funding for overseas humanitarian and disaster assistance governed by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, and USAID. Such a restructuring could be used to severely undercut the U.S. refugee system, which would already lose \$75 million in the proposed budget.

Drastic cuts to State Department and USAID funding would come as authoritarian challenges to democracy and human rights mount across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

As in years past, the Trump Administration wants the American people to believe that putting America First means abdicating our nation's founding values and rescinding our support to those striving for liberty, said Human Rights First's Rob Berschinski. The budget request makes clear that, much like his immediate predecessor, Secretary Pompeo believes that the State Department should get its swagger back by absorbing crippling cuts to key programs. Doing so would make America less safe, and would only exacerbate the crippling hit to our image abroad already brought about by this administration. Luckily, congressional Republicans and Democrats alike continue to reject the Trump Administration's moral and strategic capitulation. That's why Congress is likely to treat the budget proposals penny wise and pound foolish approach for what it is: a document headed straight for the recycling bin.

For more information or to speak with Quigley or Berschinski contact Christopher Plummer at [\[emailprotected\]](#)

Published on March 11, 2019

Share

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.