



CWS



Advocacy Guide

August Recess 2026

Every couple of months, Members of Congress go on “recess,” returning to their home states and districts. Both members of the House of Representatives and the Senate use these periods to engage with constituents, hold town halls and public events, conduct in-district legislative meetings, and make themselves available to their constituents. Each August, members head out on the longest recess of the year. This recess is particularly important as many members are campaigning for re-election later in the fall. The 2026 August recess is scheduled for **July 24 – August 30 (House of Representatives) and August 10 – September 11 (Senate)**.

Use this guide to learn about the latest issues facing refugees and immigrants and how to make your voice heard by your lawmakers this August.

State of Play

Lawless immigration enforcement in our communities: Federal immigration officials have shot and killed 11 people since the second Trump administration began, and 21 people have died while detained in ICE immigration detention in 2026 alone – a tragic record. In two supplemental funding bills, Congress gave ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) an extra \$210 billion for enforcement, mass detention, and deportation.

Refugees stranded abroad: For a year and a half, the Trump administration’s ongoing refugee ban has left tens of thousands of refugees waiting in limbo in dangerous conditions. More than 22,000 were “ready for departure” with all medical and security checks completed. Today, only white South Africans are being resettled through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). CWS and others continue fighting in court to restore the refugee program to one that protects and resettles refugees most at risk around the world.

Refugees cut off from life-sustaining support: The so-called “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” cut off refugees and other humanitarian entrants from federal food assistance (SNAP). U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is also not processing refugees’ applications for green cards, leaving them without any path to obtain SNAP. Refugees and other humanitarian entrants will soon be cut off from Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP, and premium tax credits under the Affordable Care Act, which will lead to unmet health care needs while families struggle to support themselves.

Ways to Take Action

- 1. Schedule an in-district legislative visit**
See tools for scheduling and organizing a legislative visit [here](#) and find a template outreach email below
- 2. Attend a town hall or public event held by your member of Congress**
Find sample questions below
- 3. Call or email your member of Congress**
Sign up to receive the latest [CWS Action Alerts](#)
- 4. Hold a rally, vigil, or protest outside a congressional office**
Use Interfaith Immigration Coalition’s [guide](#)

How to Find Town Halls and Contact Your Members of Congress

There is no public repository of congressional town halls or public events. However, you can find them by signing up for your elected officials' mailing lists, monitoring their social media, and checking out their websites' "event" pages. The best way to find out about the member's schedule during the recess is likely to call their local office and ask for the member's recess schedule. Here are some ways of finding contact information to make a call:

House of Representatives

Type in your ZIP code and/or address in the [House Find Your Representative web tool](#), and click on the mail icon below the Representative's profile image.

Senate

Google "[Senator [Name] Office Locations]" to find the locations (and contact information) of the local district offices of your Senator. Reach out to the office nearest you!

Sample Outreach Email

Subject Line – *Constituent Meeting Request – [City] District Office*

Dear [Staff First Name],

My name is [Name] and I am a [service provider/person of faith/refugee/community member] in [City, State]. I'm reaching out to inquire whether [Senator/Representative + Last Name] will be holding a town hall or any other public engagement during the upcoming August recess where it would be appropriate for constituents to attend, participate, and communicate the impact of recent administrative actions to the [state/district].

In addition, I'd like to request an in-person meeting with [Senator/Representative last name] or [District Office City] staff to discuss the impact of the Trump administration's refugee ban, SNAP and Medicaid cuts, and bipartisan legislative guardrails on ICE activity. I would like to discuss steps the [Representative/Senator] can take to support refugees and other newcomers in our community.

Our group includes the following [refugee leaders, faith leaders, etc.] who are constituents of the [Senator/Representative]. Our group is available to meet [in City] on [dates] at [times].

- [List names of potential attendees]

Our community welcomes refugees, and I urge your office to do as well. I look forward to your response.

Warmly,

[Your Name]

Sample Town Hall Questions

Deportation and Detention

- When I watch what is happening in Congress, all I hear about are tax cuts for wealthy Americans and billions of dollars being spent on border militarization and draconian immigration enforcement that targets neighbors who have lived here for years if not decades. What are you doing to push back against legislation and funding that needlessly harms immigrants and our communities?
- While our neighbors are getting killed on the streets, Congress has now allocated \$210 billion to support the administration's immigration enforcement agenda. What are you doing to ensure there are real, legislative guardrails on ICE?

Public Benefits

- The so-called "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" cut off refugees, asylees, and others from SNAP and will soon strip them from accessing Medicaid, Medicare, and other health care programs. How are you making sure that refugees, asylees, and all community members are able to feed their families and receive essential medical care?

Refugee Resettlement

- The Refugee Act of 1980 requires the Trump administration to meaningfully consult with Congress before signing a Presidential Determination on refugee admissions for the coming fiscal year. How are you planning to engage in this process to ensure stranded refugees can resettle in the U.S. under this administration, including family reunification cases, Iranians fleeing religious persecution, those stranded in Afghanistan, and those fleeing violence in Sudan, the DRC, and elsewhere?
- The refugee resettlement program has a long history of strong bipartisan support and was enshrined into law by the 1980 Refugee Act, but was suspended indefinitely through Executive Order. Refugee resettlement makes our communities stronger, safer, and more prosperous, and over a 15 year period refugees contributed a staggering \$124 billion more than they cost in government expenditures. What are you doing to help save the refugee program?
- Refugees are among the most well-vetted travelers in the world. Our community has welcomed refugees through the refugee resettlement program for decades, and they have made our community stronger. But the current administration has shut the bipartisan refugee program down. Do you support an end to the refugee ban? Are you on the record calling for a resumption in refugee resettlement?
- Over 200,000 Afghan wartime allies remain at risk overseas due to their support for the U.S. mission. This month marks five years since the U.S. withdrawal. What are you doing to make sure we continue to live up to our promises and support Afghan allies?

Children

- The administration is targeting unaccompanied children for deportation and resumed immigrant detention of families. Children are among the most vulnerable individuals in the entire immigration system. How are you taking action to make sure they are treated with care and dignity and not deported to danger?

Policy Asks

- **Reverse changes from H.R. 1 that cut newcomers off from crucial federal food assistance and Medicaid.** Refugees and other humanitarian arrivals who fled persecution are now categorically ineligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), unless they hold a green card, and they will soon be cut off from Medicaid with few exceptions. Amid a nationwide affordability crisis marked by rising grocery prices, food insecurity is already rising for tens of thousands of people who previously counted on SNAP to access basic nutrition. The impending cuts to Medicaid will compound the existing challenges, contributing to unmet health care needs while jeopardizing newcomers' ability to support themselves and their families.
- **Condemn DHS's escalating campaign of enforcement, detention, and deportation as well as its targeting of refugees for "re-vetting." Conduct rigorous oversight into the administration's enforcement actions.** Rescind the combined \$210+ billion that Congress appropriated through the budget reconciliation process for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Oppose the allocation of any additional funding for immigration enforcement and detention. Oppose any operation carrying out the unlawful, indiscriminate arrests, detention, and "re-vetting" of refugees across the United States. Conduct oversight into the administration's ongoing effort to inspect, "re-vet," and terminate the status of resettled refugees.

- **Speak out in support of those who remain stranded overseas because of the Trump administration's refugee ban and urge the administration to support a Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions that responds to global needs.** Urge the Trump administration to restore the refugee resettlement program to protect those who are most at risk, and abide by all court orders on the refugee ban. Call for the resettlement of refugee populations that Congress has designated as "of special humanitarian concern," such as follow-to-join family reunification cases, Lautenberg refugees in Iran fleeing religious persecution, and U.S.-affiliated Iraqis. Condemn the near exclusive resettlement of white South Africans through the refugee program when so many others are in need. Lift up the stories of those who have been stranded in public and in any private engagements or consultations with State Department and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials.
- **Advance pro-immigrant and pro-refugee proposals.** Support legislation like the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act ([H.R.1061/S.455](#)) and the GRACE Act ([H.R.6870/S.3535](#)), as well as efforts to reinstate TPS for Haiti ([S. 4814](#)) and TPS for Venezuela ([Discharge Petition No. 18](#)).

Additional Resources

- [CWS August Recess Policy Asks](#)
- [Subscribe](#) to the [CWS Daily State of Play Newsletter](#)
- [Advocacy 101 Toolkit](#)