

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to require the President to set a minimum annual goal for the number of refugees to be admitted, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WELCH, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. KIM, and Mr. SCHIFF) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to require the President to set a minimum annual goal for the number of refugees to be admitted, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Guaranteed Refugee
5 Admission Ceiling Enhancement Act” or the “GRACE
6 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ADMISSION OF REFUGEES.**

2 Section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act
3 (8 U.S.C. 1157) is amended—

4 (1) in subsection (a)—

5 (A) by striking paragraphs (1) and (2) and
6 inserting the following:

7 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in sub-
8 section (b), the number of refugees who may be ad-
9 mitted under this section in any fiscal year shall be
10 the sum of—

11 “(A) such number as the President deter-
12 mines is justified by humanitarian concerns or
13 otherwise in the national interest, which shall
14 be not fewer than 125,000; and

15 “(B) such number as the President deter-
16 mines shall be admitted to the United States
17 through community or private sponsorship, by
18 which community groups and private sponsors
19 provide to a refugee and the immediate relatives
20 or beneficiaries of the refugee initial reception
21 and placement services similar to services pro-
22 vided by domestic resettlement agencies and
23 local affiliates, in lieu of services typically pro-
24 vided by domestic resettlement agencies and
25 local affiliates.

1 “(2) ABSENCE OF DETERMINATION.—If the
2 President does not issue a determination under
3 paragraph (1) before the beginning of a fiscal year,
4 the number of refugees who may be admitted in that
5 fiscal year under this section shall be 125,000.”;

6 (B) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and
7 (4) as paragraphs (4) and (7), respectively;

8 (C) by inserting after paragraph (2) the
9 following:

10 “(3) NUMERICAL GOALS.—Each officer of the
11 Federal Government responsible for refugee admis-
12 sions or refugee resettlement shall treat as the nu-
13 merical goals for refugee admissions under this sec-
14 tion for the applicable fiscal year—

15 “(A)(i) a determination under paragraph
16 (1); or

17 “(ii) in the absence of a determination
18 under paragraph (1), the number under para-
19 graph (2); and

20 “(B) a determination under subsection
21 (b).”; and

22 (D) by inserting after paragraph (4), as
23 redesignated, the following:

24 “(5) CONSIDERATION OF RESETTLEMENT
25 NEEDS.—In making a determination under para-

1 graph (1), the President shall consider the number
2 of refugees who are in need of resettlement in a
3 third country, as determined by the United Nations
4 High Commissioner for Refugees in the most re-
5 cently published projected global resettlement needs
6 report.

7 “(6) REGIONAL ALLOCATIONS.—The President
8 shall determine regional allocations for admissions
9 under this subsection, which shall—

10 “(A)(i) reflect the projected needs identi-
11 fied by the United Nations High Commissioner
12 for Refugees in the projected global resettlement
13 needs report for the calendar year begin-
14 ning immediately after the beginning of the ap-
15 plicable fiscal year; or

16 “(ii) include an assessment by the Sec-
17 retary of State detailing the humanitarian and
18 national interest justifications for prioritizing
19 refugee admissions from 1 or more regions; and

20 “(B) include an unallocated reserve that
21 the Secretary of State, after notifying the Com-
22 mittee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the
23 Committee on the Judiciary of the House of
24 Representatives, may use for 1 or more regions

1 in which the need for additional refugee admis-
2 sions arises.”; and

3 (2) by adding at the end the following:

4 “(g) QUARTERLY PUBLIC REPORTS ON ADMIS-
5 SIONS.—Not later than 15 days after the last day of each
6 quarter, the President shall submit to the Committee on
7 the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Ju-
8 diciary of the House of Representatives, and publish on
9 a publicly accessible website, a report that includes the
10 following:

11 “(1) The number of refugees admitted to the
12 United States during the preceding quarter.

13 “(2) The number of refugees admitted to the
14 United States during the preceding quarter, ex-
15 pressed as a percentage of the number of refugees
16 authorized to be admitted in accordance with the de-
17 terminations under subsections (a) and (b) for the
18 applicable fiscal year.

19 “(3) The cumulative number of refugees admit-
20 ted to the United States during the applicable fiscal
21 year, as of the last day of the preceding quarter.

22 “(4) The number of refugees to be admitted to
23 the United States during the remainder of the appli-
24 cable fiscal year so as to achieve the numerical goals

1 set forth in the determinations under subsections (a)
2 and (b) for such fiscal year.

3 “(5) The number of refugees from each region
4 admitted to the United States during the preceding
5 quarter, expressed as a percentage of the allocation
6 for each region under subsection (a)(6) for the appli-
7 cable fiscal year.

8 “(h) QUARTERLY REPORTS ON PROCESSING.—Not
9 later than 15 days after the last day of each quarter, the
10 President shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary
11 of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the
12 House of Representatives a report that includes the fol-
13 lowing:

14 “(1) ALIENS WITH ENHANCED SECURITY
15 CHECKS.—

16 “(A) The number of aliens, by nationality,
17 for whom an enhanced security check has been
18 requested who were security-cleared during the
19 preceding quarter, expressed as a percentage of
20 all cases successfully adjudicated, approved, and
21 security-cleared by the Director of the U.S.
22 Citizenship and Immigration Services in the ap-
23 plicable fiscal year.

24 “(B) The number of aliens, by nationality,
25 for whom an enhanced security check has been

1 requested who were admitted to the United
2 States during the preceding quarter.

3 “(2) CIRCUIT RIDES.—

4 “(A) For the preceding quarter—

5 “(i) the number of Refugee Corps of-
6 ficers deployed on circuit rides, expressed
7 as a percentage of the overall number of
8 Refugee Corps officers;

9 “(ii) the number of individuals inter-
10 viewed—

11 “(I) on each circuit ride; and

12 “(II) at each circuit ride location;

13 “(iii) the number of circuit rides;

14 “(iv) for each circuit ride—

15 “(I) the duration of the circuit
16 ride;

17 “(II) the average number of
18 interviews conducted daily on the cir-
19 cuit ride; and

20 “(III) the percentages of inter-
21 views conducted for—

22 “(aa) individuals who re-
23 quire an enhanced security check;
24 and

1 “(bb) individuals who do not
2 require an enhanced security
3 check; and

4 “(v) the number of interviews com-
5 pleted by video teleconferencing.

6 “(B) For the subsequent quarter—

7 “(i) the number of circuit rides sched-
8 uled; and

9 “(ii) the number of circuit rides
10 planned.

11 “(3) PROCESSING.—For the preceding quar-
12 ter—

13 “(A) the average number of days be-
14 tween—

15 “(i) the date on which an individual is
16 identified by the United States Govern-
17 ment as a refugee; and

18 “(ii) the date on which such individual
19 is interviewed by the Secretary of Home-
20 land Security;

21 “(B) the average number of days be-
22 tween—

23 “(i) the date on which an individual
24 identified by the United States Govern-

1 ment as a refugee is interviewed by the
2 Secretary of Homeland Security; and

3 “(ii) the date on which such individual
4 is admitted to the United States; and

5 “(C) with respect to individuals identified
6 by the United States Government as refugees
7 who have been interviewed by the Secretary of
8 Homeland Security, the approval, denial, and
9 hold rates for the applications for admission of
10 such individuals, by nationality.

11 “(4) PLAN AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—If
12 the number of refugees admitted during the pre-
13 ceding quarter is less than 25 percent of the number
14 of refugees authorized to be admitted in accordance
15 with the determinations under subsections (a) and
16 (b) for the applicable fiscal year, the President shall
17 submit—

18 “(A) an assessment of country conditions
19 and emergency humanitarian circumstances
20 that contributed to the number of refugees ad-
21 mitted;

22 “(B) a plan that describes the procedural
23 or personnel changes necessary to ensure the
24 admission of the number of refugees authorized
25 to be admitted to the United States in accord-

1 ance with determinations under subsections (a)
2 and (b), including a projection of the number of
3 refugees to be admitted to the United States
4 each month so as to achieve the numerical goals
5 set forth in such determinations; and

6 “(C) any additional information relating to
7 the pace of refugee admissions, as determined
8 by the President.

9 “(5) ENHANCED SECURITY CHECK DEFINED.—
10 In this subsection, the term ‘enhanced security
11 check’ means any evaluation process to investigate
12 national security concerns, including terrorism, espi-
13 onage, sabotage, or the illegal transfer of goods,
14 technology, or sensitive information, including—

15 “(A) any process within U.S. Citizenship
16 and Immigration Services for handling cases
17 with national security concerns;

18 “(B) any interagency check requested by
19 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services dur-
20 ing the adjudication process to investigate na-
21 tional security concerns;

22 “(C) any additional vetting or review of
23 applicants from a country that is a state spon-
24 sor of terrorism or a country with full or partial

1 suspension of entry into the United States
2 under this Act; and

3 “(D) any process to screen applicant data
4 against publicly available social media for na-
5 tional security purposes.

6 “(i) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
7 tion may be construed—

8 “(1) to inhibit the expeditious processing of ref-
9 ugee and asylum applications; or

10 “(2) to restrict the authority of the Secretary of
11 Homeland Security to admit aliens to the United
12 States under any other Act.”.