



## ///Rapid Response 5/3/11 Domestic Refugee Resettlement Reform & Modernization Act of 2011

Representative Gary Peters has introduced legislation (H.R. 1475) which would reform the federal program that assists refugees by sending more resources to states where refugees are expected to move. It would also give the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), more flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and direct resources more effectively. It would not add any new costs for these changes.

The Refugee Act of 1980 authorized cash and medical assistance, as well as access to housing and job placement services for newly arriving refugees. These benefits are intended to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency through employment during the eight month period for which benefits are provided. However, structural deficiencies within the resettlement program are hindering this process, risking the dependence of refugees on federal assistance for many months or years. This bill would:

- Revise the state funding formula so that it accounts for future refugee arrivals and more accurately distributes funds to states.
- Give ORR broader authority and ability to make structural changes.
- Increase transparency within ORR and require greater analysis of program operations and barriers to refugee sufficiency in areas like mental health needs, housing needs, and long-term employment.

For a list of Representatives that have agreed to co-sponsor this legislation [click here](#). If your Representative is not already a co-sponsor, please contact him/her to encourage his/her co-sponsorship.

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