

SEPTEMBER 30, 2002

**SCHAKOWSKY CALLS ON BUSH ADMINISTRATION TO REVERSE
DISMAL RECORD ON REFUGEE POLICY**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today called on the Bush Administration to reverse its dismal record on refugee policy. In a letter to President Bush, Schakowsky wrote, *"I hope that you will act to increase the current admissions level and provide adequate funding to reverse this year's dismal record of addressing the needs of religious and political refugees around the world."*

The Bush Administration had authorized 70,000 refugees to be admitted to the United States in FY 2002. However, less than 21,000 refugees have entered the country to date. In addition, 45,000 refugees have been granted refugee status but have not yet been admitted because they have yet to receive security clearance.

Schakowsky warned that these refugees will not be able to enter the country this fiscal year which ends today. *"Therefore, as you determine the refugee admissions level for FY2003, I strongly urge you to set that level at 120,000 or higher. That will allow us to maintain the current level of 70,000 while also admitting the nearly 50,000 refugees who would have been admitted this year absent delays in processing. Unless you agree to raise the level, this year's delays will result in the denial of refugee status for others equally in need."*

Below is Schakowsky's letter to President Bush.

September 27, 2002

*The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500*

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to express my serious concern with the delays in the Refugee Resettlement Program and to urge you to authorize at least 120,000 refugee admissions in Fiscal Year 2003. Many community and ethnic organizations, houses of worship, and family members of waiting refugees and applicants in my district have approached me about

the major delays in processing refugees who have already been granted refugee status to the United States and other applicants to the program. My district is home to many refugees who have benefited from this program and to groups who would like to continue to help refugees start safe and productive lives in the United States.

Although you authorized 70,000 refugees to be admitted to the United States in FY 2002, less than 21,000 refugees have entered the country to date. In addition, I understand that approximately 45,000 refugees have been granted refugee status but have not yet been admitted because they have yet to receive security clearance. Because they will not be able to enter the country before the current fiscal year ends next Monday, they will be counted as part of next year's limit. Therefore, as you determine the refugee admissions level for FY2003, I strongly urge you to set that level at 120,000 or higher. That will allow us to maintain the current level of 70,000 while also admitting the nearly 50,000 refugees who would have been admitted this year absent delays in processing. Unless you agree to raise the level, this year's delays will result in the denial of refugee status for others equally in need.

I am particularly concerned that we act expeditiously to approve entry for the 45,000 refugees who have already been granted refugee status, including Iranian Jews and other religious minorities. Today, thousands more men, women and children - victims of war, terror, persecution, and oppression - remain in immediate danger and are in urgent need of the protection that would be afforded by resettlement in the United States.

This virtual stoppage of refugee arrivals to the U.S. must not be allowed to continue. Delayed arrivals have adverse effects on families living in Illinois and all over the country who are waiting for their immediate family members to join them and betray our nation's time-honored principle of offering refuge to those fleeing oppression and tyranny around the world. Roughly 80 percent of all refugees are women and children and many of them are either stranded or facing daily threats. The United States should be and can be a place of haven for them if you set reasonable admissions levels and provide the resources necessary for the Migration and Refugee Assistance program.

Again, I hope that you will act to increase the current admissions level and provide adequate funding to reverse this year's dismal record of addressing the needs of religious and political refugees around the world. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to working together with you to improve our nation's immigration policies.

□□□□□ Sincerely,

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□□□□□ Jan Schakowsky

□□□□□ Member of Congress