

Legislation Text

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Urging the White House to establish a process to swiftly admit displaced Ukrainians into the United States and grant refugee status to Ukrainian citizens.

WHEREAS, Over three millions Ukrainians have been forced to flee their country in the wake of Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion; and

WHEREAS, A majority of the refugees have traveled to neighboring Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Moldova and Hungary, according to the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, While these nations have graciously accepted Ukrainians fleeing violence, many are struggling to support the growing number of asylum seekers; and

WHEREAS, Other states in Europe, and allies around the world, must be willing to support and accept displaced Ukrainians; and

WHEREAS, The United States has extended temporary protected status (TPS) to Ukrainians presently in the country as of March 1, but Ukrainian refugees seeking to come to the United States - including those with family ties - are reportedly facing the traditionally lengthy and bureaucratic process to gain admittance; and

WHEREAS, Humanitarian organizations and coalitions have urged the Biden administration to respond to the growing crisis by modifying existing immigration protocols; and

WHEREAS, The Jewish Federations of North America, in partnership with major organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League, urged President Biden to "take immediate steps to help Ukrainian civilians, including by expediting the resettlement of Ukrainians who are already in process to come to the United States thanks to their close family ties here," and to, "admit Ukrainians with pending immigrant visa petitions as refugees, as has been done in the past for Iraqis and Haitians during crises in their communities"; and

WHEREAS, The Biden administration has thus far tempered expectations for expediting Ukrainian refugees, with a State Department official saying most refugees want to stay in Europe and that "...resettlement to the United States is not a quick process"; and

WHEREAS, Some Ukrainians seeking resettlement in the United States have resorted to flying to Mexico - where a visa is not required to enter - to seek asylum at the U.S.- Mexico border; and

WHEREAS, The Biden administration should be commended for swiftly extending TPS to Ukrainians here in the states and for its commitment to providing millions of dollars in humanitarian assistance to neighboring countries presently accepting the brunt of refugees; and

WHEREAS, More must be done, however, to streamline refugees seeking to come to the United States for resettlement or attempting to reunite with family members; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby urges the White House to establish a process to swiftly admit displaced Ukrainians into the United States and grant refugee status to Ukrainian citizens.