



FREE MINDS AND FREE MARKETS

## Raising the Refugee Cap Should Be Just the Start of Fixing America's Inhumane Immigration Policy

Billy Binion

May 3, 2021

President Joe Biden on Monday announced he would move to increase the annual refugee cap set by former President Donald Trump, who had limited admissions to a historically low 15,000 refugees during his time in office.

Biden's announcement came after he received heavy criticism last month when he revealed he would keep Trump's cap in place after promising to expand it by more than 300 percent. Today he said he would reverse course again and attempt to meet that earlier promise, although he said it likely wouldn't happen by September 30, the end of the fiscal year.

"Today, I am revising the United States' annual refugee admissions cap to 62,500 for this fiscal year," he said in a statement. "The sad truth is that we will not achieve [that goal] this year. We are working quickly to undo the damage of the last four years. It will take some time, but that work is already underway. We have reopened the program to new refugees. And by changing the regional allocations last month, we have already increased the number of refugees ready for departure to the United States."

The president's April announcement confused many, not least of which because his purported explanation didn't square with reality. *The New York Times* reported that his administration cited the influx of unaccompanied migrant children at the border as putting too much of a strain on the refugee system.

"The refugee program and the unaccompanied child program are separate items in the HHS budget," David Bier, a research fellow at the Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, told me last month. "This is purely about politics."

Biden has received quite a bit of heat for his policies at the border. As I wrote last month, he's already broken a campaign promise to halt the confiscation of private property for border wall construction. The Biden administration has also made certain parts of the asylum system even more restrictive than his predecessor and is defending Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in court after the agency erected a fake university, defrauded immigrants out of the tuition money, and deported them without refunds.

Today, however, it appears Biden is attempting to honor a campaign promise, even if it was the result of public pressure. "President Trump's decision to close America's doors to refugees fleeing persecution is cruel and shortsighted," Biden said in November 2019. "As president, I will restore America's historic commitment to welcoming those whose lives are threatened by conflict and crisis."