

Middle East Refugees: 91% on Food Stamps, 70% on Cash Welfare



Immigration Subcommittee Background:

The statistics in the chart are provided by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The ORR figures defined refugees from the “Middle East” as being from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen. During the time period referenced in the chart (FY2008 to FY2013), the United States admitted 115,617 refugees from the Middle East and granted asylum to another 10,026. Also during this time frame, according to the Department of Homeland Security, the United States granted permanent admission to a total of 308,805 individuals from these same 10 Middle Eastern countries (designated as refugee-sending nations) through the issuance of green cards. Those with green cards are Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) of the United States who may apply for citizenship after 5 years and bring their foreign relatives into the U.S. on green cards as well. Refugees are required to apply to adjust to LPR status within 1 year of their admission to the United States. The DHS 2013 report on Refugees and Asylees list the top ten countries, numerically, for refugee admission into the United States as: Iraq, Burma, Bhutan, Somalia, Cuba, Iran, Congo, Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. More broadly, concerning all immigration, the Migration Policy Institute notes that the **U.S. has taken in “about 20 percent of the world’s international migrants, even as it represents less than 5 percent of the global**

population,” and that 1 in 4 U.S. residents is now either an immigrant or born to immigrant parents. The Census projects that another 14 million immigrants will arrive in the United States between now and 2025, easily eclipsing the highest previous historical watermark for foreign-born population share.

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