

Christian Charities Pushing for More Refugees

This week, a group of Christian charities demanded the government continue taking in more foreign refugees.

These charities, referred to officially as “Voluntary Agencies” or VOLAGs, participate in the Refugee Resettlement Program administered by the State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and the Office of Refugee Resettlement. They are contracted to assist refugees in getting settled in their new homes in America.

According to the Refugee Resettlement Watch website, the nine main VOLAGs receiving taxpayer funding are:

- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Lutheran Immigrant Aid Society
- International Rescue Committee
- World Relief Corporation
- Immigrant and Refugee Services of America
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
- Church World Service
- Domestic and Foreign Missionary Service of the Episcopal Church of the USA
- Ethiopian Community Development Center

Refugee resettlement used to be handled through a program known as the Private Sector Initiative, which allowed sponsoring agencies to bring over refugees if the agencies were willing to cover costs of resettlement and support. The program was discontinued in the mid-1990s due to lack of participation.

Public funding has instead driven out private money in the current program. The program costs taxpayers more than \$1 billion a year.

Now the VOLAGs are advocating for even more refugee resettlement in the U.S. Last week, at a gathering of groups that deal with refugees called "The G2 Summit," the leaders of several of these organizations—and others—called for continued refugee resettlement in the U.S.

But without private funding to support these refugees, there will be even greater demands on American taxpayers. Welfare costs, never officially counted in the expense of refugee resettlement programs by government officials, add about \$10-20 billion to the actual cost to taxpayers.