



## Breaking the Link between Human Trafficking and Forced Migration Work for Asylum Seekers

### ***Pass the Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act ([H.R. 1325](#))***

Today, men, women and families are forced to flee to the United States in search of safety and security. Horrifically, once they arrive many get ensnared by human traffickers. As leaders in ending human trafficking, the Alliance to End Human Trafficking and the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd have joined forces to work with policy makers and Congress to break the link between human trafficking and forced migration. The 118th Congress has the opportunity to address root causes of human trafficking in the U.S. and reduce the vulnerability of immigrants to exploitation by ensuring that asylum applicants have quicker access to work permits.

We are members of faith-based organizations, committed to advocating for the dignity of all individuals with particular concern for those men, women and children forced to migrate who are put at grave risk of being trafficked once they arrive in the United States.

We are asking for support of [H.R. 1325](#), the ***Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act***, which would improve the process and shorten the waiting period for eligible asylum applicants to receive work authorization. The bill would enable those who have applied for asylum to obtain work authorization more quickly permitting them to sustain themselves and their families and contribute to society.

Under current law, asylum applicants are not eligible for work permits until 180 days after they file their asylum claims. Processing backlogs in the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) mean they often wait up to a year or more for

approval once they complete the work permit application.

The ***Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act*** would direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide employment authorization for eligible asylum applicants (provided they are not in detention and the application is not determined “frivolous”) 30 days after they file their application. The work authorization would remain in place throughout the application process.

Currently, during these extended wait times, individuals and families are at extreme risk because they have no legal means to support themselves leaving them vulnerable to human traffickers.

As of April 1, 2023, there were 289,310 asylum work permit renewals pending at USCIS. These renewals would be unnecessary under [H.R. 1325](#) thus freeing USCIS staff to work directly on pending asylum applications and reducing or eliminating the current backlog. Additionally, businesses would no longer be forced to repeatedly go through work permit renewal paperwork while a person’s asylum case is being processed and reviewed.

***Months without legal authorization to work make asylum seekers prime targets for sex and labor traffickers.***

***Please pass [H.R. 1325](#) to significantly reduce the vulnerability of asylum seekers, enable them to support themselves and their families, and reduce red tape for businesses.***