



ASHA Statement on Administration Humanitarian Parole Program

The American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA) is greatly encouraged by the recent steps taken by the Biden Administration to address the unprecedented number of migrants seeking asylum in the US. The crisis at the border is both a security and humanitarian one...and so we need solutions to address all sides of the issue, including the workforce shortage in our country. Allowing entry into the US for up to 30,000 migrants a month from Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba and Haiti with a two-year permit to live and work, provided they have the financial backing of a US sponsor, has tremendous potential to yield significant benefits to those desperately seeking refuge from oppressive regimes and the US employers who desperately need workers that will in turn, improve the economic security of this country.

The US is facing a severe workforce shortage across all industries, including the senior living industry. It is threatening our ability to meet current needs, not to mention the future needs of an aging and vulnerable population. ASHA represents owners, operators and developers of senior living communities who offer supportive services in a home setting where seniors can “age in place” with dignity and respect while engaging with their neighbors, caregivers, family, and friends in a manner that promotes not only wellness, but wellbeing. The pandemic has contributed to a workforce shortage that cannot be remedied by private sector solutions alone. There are 10 million unfilled jobs in the country today and a 3.5% unemployment rate, or 6 million unemployed. Simply put, we need to grow the population to fill these jobs.

- An estimate 250,000 jobs were lost in nursing homes and assisted living since the beginning of the pandemic.
- Demand for caregivers is expected to grow 33 percent from 2020 to 2030, much faster than the average for all occupations according to BLS.
- People are living longer and with more chronic conditions necessitating the need for supportive care. We can't let them down.

This announcement is a positive step toward reform. It is not perfect and will require much navigation by the private sector to support and employ these asylum seekers in search of a better future. However, it signals that meaningful reform can be achieved to address the workforce shortage, especially for those essential workers such as caregivers and nurses who are in short supply and essential to the overall health of our aging population and nation.

The real solution must come from Congressional action. We look forward to working with 118th Congress on making significant steps toward this goal such as creating a path to citizenship for DACA recipients and TPS workers, and creating a new visa category for in demand, front-line long-term care workers. Policymakers need to recognize the needs of the aging population, including our nation's veterans, and take steps to ensure we have a stable workforce in place to serve them.

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