

Advocacy Guide 2025



DEAR FRIENDS,

The word “advocacy” comes from the same etymology as the word “voice.” To advocate is to lend our voice, speaking up on behalf of or in concert with others — particularly, to plead for justice.

In many parts of the world, including in some contexts in which World Relief partners with local churches globally, raising your voice is dangerous. Like John the Baptist boldly telling King Herod that his behavior was displeasing to God, speaking up against injustice can have deadly consequences in some parts of our world today. Thankfully, for those of us blessed to have been born or naturalized as U.S. citizens, we live under a form of government that, while certainly imperfect, *invites* us to speak and share our perspectives. Like all Americans, including those with different beliefs or values, Christians are invited to share our convictions, convictions that should be shaped by the biblical vision of justice which calls for the protection of orphans, widows, foreigners, the poor and all who are vulnerable to injustice.

We’ve always been inspired by Jesus’ parable of a widow who pleads persistently — maybe even to the point of annoyance — for justice (Luke 18:1-8). We are called to emulate her, being just as dogged in pleading for justice before those in authority over our society to change public policies. And, sometimes, persistence pays off — whether that’s faithfully calling your Senator’s office and leaving messages or meeting with a staffer for your U.S. Representative or writing a Letter to the Editor of the local newspaper. Sometimes, like Moses, Esther or Nehemiah, God may use our advocacy before governmental leaders to make world-changing, life-saving policy shifts. Sometimes, like John the Baptist, our advocacy may be ignored — or possibly even punished, though we’re thankfully unlikely in the United States to face decapitation for speaking out. In either case, our call to advocate is not to be successful; it’s to be faithful.

Ultimately, Jesus’ parable of the persistent widow wasn’t intended as a lesson in good political advocacy: it was a challenge to persistence in *prayer*, speaking up before a Sovereign God who loves us and loves the vulnerable. If even an unjust judge — or a president, Senator, governor or mayor — can be moved to do the right thing through persistent and creative advocacy, how much more will our perfectly just Heavenly Father “bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night?” (Luke 18:6).

This advocacy guide is designed to equip you with the tools, language and confidence to engage effectively with elected officials on different issues concerning immigration and refugee resettlement. Inside, you’ll find a biblical foundation for advocacy, key terms and facts and practical guidance — including do’s and don’ts — for leading a respectful and impactful conversation, whether in person or virtually.

So, please keep reading, keep advocating and keep praying — for “at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9).

— The World Relief Advocacy Team



World Relief is a global Christian humanitarian organization. Our mission is to boldly engage in the world's greatest crises in partnership with the church.

- **World Relief is a non-partisan organization** — we will never endorse candidates or political parties.
- **We are not, however, an apolitical organization** — we actively encourage our lawmakers to pursue public policies guided by biblical principles.
- **We are committed to the power of prayer**, and we take seriously the biblical injunction to pray “for kings and all those in authority” (1 Timothy 2:2).
- **We believe that immigration policies can and should ensure security for American citizens** while demonstrating compassion and affirming the dignity of immigrants.

WORLD RELIEF POLICY PRIORITIES

At World Relief, our advocacy is rooted in both conviction and compassion. The priorities below reflect our commitment to protecting the vulnerable, promoting peace and security and upholding the God-given worth of every person.

- Sustain a stable, fully funded U.S. refugee resettlement program with a relatively high refugee ceiling.
- Support a robust foreign assistance program to respond to world's greatest crises, especially where World Relief or our partners are actively responding such as Sudan, South Sudan, Chad, Ukraine, Haiti, Gaza, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Support a five-year reauthorization of PEPFAR, a bipartisan U.S. initiative to provide treatment for and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, has saved more than 25 million lives since launched during the administration of President George W. Bush.
- Support border solutions that increase security and order while also respecting due process for those seeking asylum.
- Support a path to citizenship for DACA recipients and other Dreamers.
- Support comprehensive immigration solutions including a restitution-based legalization process and path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
- Urging Congress and the Trump Administration to focus on those convicted of serious offenses and limit immigration enforcement actions in ways that protect family unity and religious freedom.
- Oppose efforts to withdraw temporary legal protections and subsequently initiate deportations, including for those who currently benefit from Temporary Protected Status (TPS), humanitarian parole (including large numbers of Afghans, Ukrainians, Venezuelans, Haitians, Cubans and Nicaraguans paroled into the U.S. in recent years) and Deferred Action.

You can find more information about our policy priorities as well as a simple tool to connect with your elected officials on our website: worldrelief.org/advocate

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

At World Relief, advocacy exists to stand in the gap and present the realities of injustice worldwide to those in positions of influence to systemically change unjust situations.

- Advocacy is pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea or policy.
- Advocacy is the organized pursuit of change grounded in the reality of *what is*. Through coordinated actions, it brings critical issues to light, shapes public attitudes and influences laws and policies to help build a more just and compassionate society.

SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR ADVOCACY

Government is a God-ordained institution (Romans 13), and Christians have an opportunity to shape public policies for the love of neighbor and the common good. We know God cares deeply about the role and work of the government in society, and so should we. In Scripture, we learn that Christ is our advocate before the Father. Scripture is also clear that we should care about and defend the vulnerable:

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” (Proverbs 31:8-9, NIV)

“Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the rights of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” (Psalm 82:3-4, NIV)

“Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.” (Zechariah 7:10, NIV)

Jesus taught us that part of the greatest commandment is to love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus uses the example of the Samaritan who helps the wounded traveler along the road to Jericho to demonstrate what it means to love your neighbor (Luke 10:21-37) Loving our neighbor means stepping out of our comfort zone. **Loving our neighbor also means asking hard questions about why unjust conditions persist and stewarding the influence that God has entrusted to each of us to change them.**

KEY TERMS

As you prepare to meet with your elected official, it's helpful to understand key immigration terms. These definitions are meant to support your learning so you can speak clearly and confidently. While terminology provides clarity in conversation, it's important to remember that these words refer to real people — each with their own stories, strengths and struggles.

Labels like “refugee,” “asylum seeker” or “undocumented immigrant” may describe legal status, but they do not define a person's identity. Every individual is made in the image of God, with inherent dignity and purpose. As you advocate, you can reflect that truth — speaking with both accuracy and compassion.

- **Migrant:** A broad term for a person who moves from one place to another, within or across borders. Often this is for work, safety or family reasons. Not all migrants are seeking asylum or protection.
- **Asylum Seeker:** An individual who professes to meet the legal definition of a refugee upon arrival in the country where they wish to stay, but whose case has not yet been adjudicated by an appropriate authority.
- **Refugee:** A person who has fled their country because of a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their race, religion, national origin, political opinion or particular social group. A refugee has their claim vetted by the appropriate authority while they are still outside of the country they are attempting to migrate to.
- **Undocumented/Unauthorized Immigrant:** A person residing in a country without official authorization, such as a visa or legal status. This can result from entering without inspection or overstaying for a visa.
- **Naturalized Citizen:** An immigrant who has been granted U.S. citizenship after fulfilling the requirements set by Congress including lawful residence and passing a naturalization exam.
- **Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR):** Commonly known as “green card holder,” a LPR is non-citizen who is legally allowed to live and work in the U.S. indefinitely. Not all rights of citizenship apply.
- **Temporary Protected Status (TPS):** A temporary immigration status granted to eligible individuals from countries experiencing armed conflict, natural disaster or other conditions allowing them to live and work in the U.S. without fear of deportation (at least temporarily).
- **Humanitarian Parole:** A legal authority that allows the Department of Homeland Security to allow individuals who may not otherwise qualify for admission to lawfully enter the United States for humanitarian or “public interest” reasons on a case-by-case basis.

- **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA):** A program that offers temporary protection from deportation and a work authorization to undocumented individuals that meet specific criteria, who were brought to the U.S. as children.
- **PEPFAR:** The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, an ambitious program launched in 2003 under President George W. Bush to address the crisis of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the world; it is credited with having saved more than 25 million lives.

KEY FACTS

When meeting with an elected official, facts can be useful as you build up your argument. The data highlights immigration policies intersect with national security, economic vitality, the global church and public opinion among U.S. evangelicals. These facts can be used to affirm that welcoming immigrants and refugees strengthens families, communities and our nation.

National Security

- Refugees admitted through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program already are subjected to the most thorough vetting of any category of visitor or immigrant to the U.S. ([Heritage Foundation](#))
- Since the Refugee Act of 1980, zero Americans have lost their life in an Islamist terrorist attack perpetrated by a refugee. ([Cato Institute](#))

Economics

- 45% of Fortune 500 Companies were founded or cofounded by a refugee or other immigrant or their children. ([American Immigration Council](#))
- 20 years after arrival, the average refugee adult has contributed approximately \$21,000 more in taxes than they have received in governmental assistance and services at all levels. ([University of Notre Dame study](#))
- An extensive study by The National Academies of the Sciences, Engineering and Medicine "concludes that immigration has an overall positive impact on long-run economic growth in the U.S." ([National Academies study](#))

The Persecuted Church

- According to our 2024 [The State of the Golden Door](#) Report with Open Doors US, the number of Christians who face high levels of persecution or discrimination on account of their faith has risen to 365 million, or 1 in 7 Christians worldwide.
- At the time of the release of the report, there was a dramatic increase in the resettlement of Christian refugees from the 50 countries where Christians face the most severe persecution and discrimination, from 5,390 in fiscal year 2020 to 29,493 in fiscal year 2024. That represents a 447% increase, and the highest

number of Christian refugees resettled from these 50 countries since 2016 — but refugee resettlement (including of persecuted Christians) has now been suspended, at least temporarily.

- According to the [One Part of the Body Report](#), as of the end of 2024, more than 10 million Christians are vulnerable to deportation, accounting for roughly 80 percent of all of those at risk of deportation.
- Another 7 million U.S. citizen Christians live in the same households as those at risk of deportation. Overall, one out of every 12 Christians in the U.S. — including one out of 18 evangelical Christians and nearly one out of five Catholics — are vulnerable to deportation or could lose at least one family member.
 - The deportation of all unauthorized immigrants would include deporting between 4 and 5 million parents of minor U.S. citizen children. ([American Immigration Council](#))

Immigration Reform

- According to the [2025 Lifeway Research Study](#), while nine out of 10 evangelicals support immigration legislation that would “ensure secure national borders,” the exact same share say that potential legislation addressing illegal immigration should “protect the unity of the immediate family” and “respect the God-given dignity of each person.”
- Lifeway Research also found that 74% of all evangelicals support establishing a path to citizenship for immigrants in the country illegally who meet certain qualifications, roughly the same as in a similar survey conducted last year.
- Lifeway Research shows that 70% of all evangelicals believe the U.S. has a moral responsibility to resettle refugees. A recent [Christian Statement on Refugee Resettlement](#) with 20,000 signatures affirms the continued broad support of evangelicals for those views.

ADVOCACY BEST PRACTICES

Advocating with your elected official is a powerful opportunity — and preparation makes all the difference. Whether you're meeting in person or virtually, your goal is to communicate with clarity, grace and conviction. The tips below will help you approach the conversation with professionalism, compassion and confidence. Thoughtful advocacy not only reflects your personal values and faith but also leaves a lasting impression on those entrusted with shaping policy.

DO:

Pray

- Before you go, ask the Lord to go before you, alleviate any nerves, and give you the words to speak.
- Trust God with the results!

Prepare ahead of time

- Come ready to share your story and why these issues matter to you.
- Be prepared with your talking points:
 - Avoid overtly partisan rhetoric.
 - Find points of connection between your story and the legislative office.
 - Lead with your most compelling story and most effective talking points for the audience.
- Dress professionally
 - If you meet in person, wear comfortable shoes as you might be doing a lot of walking.
 - If meeting virtually, make sure you have a neutral background and are in a well-lit room.
- Arrive or log onto the meeting a few minutes early.
- Always be courteous and respectful.
- Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to share.
- Ask questions and encourage the Member or staffer to share their position on specific legislative proposals, especially if they express only general sentiments.
- Get a staffer's business card (if in person) and send a follow-up email to the staffer.
- Stay in touch with the Member or staffer.
- Consider offering to pray for the Member of Congress or staffer — particularly if faith comes up in conversation and they are a fellow Christian. Please be mindful that a staffer may feel uncomfortable or decline the offer to pray together.
- After the meeting, take some time to reflect on how the meeting went and what you would modify or do the same for next time.

DON'T:

- Don't stretch the truth or be afraid to say, "I don't know."
 - It is okay to say, "I don't know, but I will have someone from World Relief follow up."
- Don't be discouraged if you are only able to meet with a staffer, as opposed to the Member of Congress — those staffers are trusted advisors who influence how their bosses decide to vote.
- Don't assume the staffer is a policy expert on the topic(s) you're discussing. Sometimes the staffer has a deep knowledge base on the topic, but other times, they might be new(er) to the issue.
- Don't forget to personally thank staff for their time and attention to the issue. A follow-up thank you email is also a great opportunity to further build relationship while providing additional resources.

A PRAYER FOR THE ADVOCATE

Dear Heavenly Father,

We pray for every advocate who joins you in championing the cause of the immigrant, the impoverished, the widow and the orphan. We pray that you equip the called as we are all called to love our neighbors as ourselves. We pray for eyes to see the needs and fears of our neighbors regardless of their immigration status and remind us that we belong to a global body. When one part is hurting, we all hurt too.

We pray for wisdom in our preparation and conversations with our neighbors and elected officials. We pray that you would give us a timely word for our elected officials, our immigrant neighbors and our church community. Lord, we ask that you be with those who are disheartened, fearful, overwhelmed and scared. Remind us of our callings to love our neighbors, to seek justice and make peace in a deeply broken and divided world.

We pray for a more just and compassionate world. We pray that your kingdom come to Earth as it is in heaven. We pray that as your hands and feet, we would faithfully do our part to make our world, our country, our cities and our communities more just places of flourishing for all.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

CLOSING NOTE

Our mission at World Relief is to boldly engage the world's greatest crises in partnership with the church. Advocacy is one of the ways we work to create thriving, welcoming communities where families flourish so that people can experience restorative relationship with God and their neighbors.

We believe that the American church has been called for such a time as this — to be the hands and feet of Jesus through our advocacy, our giving and our prayers. This guide is meant as one tool in this work. For more ways to partner with us, please visit worldrelief.org.

Thank you for your partnership.

worldrelief.org

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