

“Immigration Policy Failures: From Family Separation to Detention Practices”



Sponsored by: Congressman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)
Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security

Moderator

Tom Jawetz is the Vice President of Immigration Policy at American Progress. Prior to joining American Progress, Tom served as chief counsel on the Immigration Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee. In that capacity, Tom devised and executed strategies for immigration-related hearings and markups before the Committee on the Judiciary and legislation on the House floor. He has advised members of Congress and congressional staff on all areas of immigration law and policy.

Prior to his time at the Judiciary Committee, Tom worked as the immigration detention staff attorney at the National Prison Project, a part of the American Civil Liberties Union, or ACLU. There, he represented detainees in class action and individual challenges to unlawful conditions of confinement and twice testified before Congress. While at ACLU, he investigated abuses in Louisiana jails and prisons during and after Hurricane Katrina and co-authored the report “Abandoned and Abused: Orleans Parish Prisoners in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina.” He previously represented asylum seekers in judicial and administrative proceedings with the Washington Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs and served as a law clerk to the Hon. Kimba M. Wood of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Tom holds a bachelor’s degree from Dartmouth College and a J.D. from the Yale Law School.

Panelists:

Jennifer Quigley, Advocacy Strategist, Refugee Protection at Human Rights First.

As Advocacy Strategist for Refugee Protection, Jennifer Quigley crafts and executes plans to persuade policy makers to adopt Human Rights First’s proposals to protect the rights of refugees. Prior to joining Human Rights First, Jennifer worked for the U.S. Campaign for Burma for nine years, most recently as President/Executive Director focusing on the promotion of human rights, refugees and democratic change in U.S. Burma policy. During her tenure, Jennifer has testified before Congress and been quoted in numerous print, tv and online news sources. Jennifer previously worked with the Women’s League of Burma and its thirteen-member organizations on international advocacy and capacity building of women to advocate in international fora. Jennifer received an M.A. in Intercultural Management from the School for International Training and a B.A. in International Affairs from The George Washington University.

Jennifer Podkul, Director of Policy, Kids in Need of Defense (also known as KIND)

She is an international human rights lawyer and expert on child migration in the United States. Prior to joining KIND, Jennifer Podkul was a senior program officer at the Women’s Refugee Commission where she researched issues facing vulnerable migrants seeking protection in the United States and advocated for improved treatment. She is a national expert on issues affecting immigrant children, has published articles, handbooks and reports on U.S. immigration law, and she presents regularly as an expert at various conferences, briefings, and professional trainings. She co-authored “Forced from Home: The Lost Boys and Girls from Central America” and was a contributing author to “Childhood, Migration, and Human Rights in Central and North America: Causes, Policies, Practices, and Challenges.” Jennifer has taught child migration at Georgetown Law Center’s Human Rights Institute. Jennifer began her legal career as an attorney at Ayuda in Washington, D.C. first as an Equal Justice Works Fellow and later as a KIND Fellow. She served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras, holds a B.A. in American Studies and Spanish from Franklin and Marshall College and a J.D. with honors from the Washington College of Law, American University, where she was a Public Interest/Public Service Scholar.

Allen Orr, American Immigration Lawyers Association

Allen Orr is the founder of Orr Immigration Law Firm PC, a minority-owned law firm based in Washington, DC and focusing on a US corporate compliance. Mr. Orr is the recipient of the 2009 Joseph Minsky Young Lawyer Award for contributions made in the immigration law field and specifically for his work with the NMD. He is listed in The International Who's Who of Corporate Immigration Lawyers and The International Who's Who of Business Lawyers. He is the Immigration Section Chair for the National Bar Association and a member of the Board of Directors for AILA. Mr. Orr is a member of the Executive Committee in the position of Second Vice President. Mr. Orr received a BA in Philosophy from Morehouse and a JD from Howard School of Law. He is an active member of the DC, Virginia and National Bar Associations. Mr. Orr has appeared on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), FOX News and Deutsche Welle (DW), and is a frequent national and international speaker on US immigration and policy.

Sanjeev K. Sriram, MD, MPH: Physician and Health Justice Activist, Doctors for America

Dr. Sriram is the host of "Dr. America," an innovative podcast about public policy and health justice on We Act Radio. He also writes about connections between health policy, inequity, and social determinants of health. Dr. Sriram completed his medical degree and his pediatrics residency at UCLA, where he served as Chief Resident at the Department of Pediatrics. In June 2009, he earned his Master in Public Health after completing the Commonwealth Fund Mongan Fellowship in Minority Health Policy at the Harvard School of Public Health. He currently practices general pediatrics in southeast Washington, DC and is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the George Washington University School of Medicine.

Ryan Mace, Grassroots Advocacy & Refugee Specialist, Amnesty International USA

Ryan Mace is the Grassroots Advocacy & Refugee Specialist for Amnesty International USA where he works to mobilize constituent pressure to advance AIUSA's major advocacy initiatives in addition to lobbying Congress and the U.S. Government to protect and advance the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. Prior to joining AIUSA, Ryan worked for Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service as their lead Refugee Advocacy Officer. Prior to that, he worked for Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) for six years, serving in her Washington, D.C. and Seattle offices where he focused on the immigration, refugee, LGBTQ, and foreign policy portfolios.

Antonio Fernandez, President/CEO, Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio, Inc.

Antonio has been the president/CEO of Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio, Inc since May 30, 2013. Under his leadership, Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio has become one of the lead agencies in San Antonio and served 268,000 people last year alone, including assisting unaccompanied children. Fernández holds a Master's degree in business administration, a master's degree in counseling psychology and a bachelor's degree in psychology. In addition, he is a licensed professional counselor.

Born in Spain, Fernández came to the United States 24 years ago where he now lives with his wife Tanya Fernández and their daughter Elis Fernández.