



UNA ★ USA
Iowa Division

Advocacy News

c/o Iowa UNA
20 E Market St
Iowa City, IA 52245
319-337-7290

May 2021

The “Big Ask”:

Why the U.S. should Make Funding the UN a Priority

by Stacey Berry

The work of the United Nations covers five main areas: maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, supporting sustainable development along with climate action, and upholding international law.

To continue this work, funding is required from the nations that make up the UN, and with the United States being the largest contributor, this country is an essential part of continuing the important work of the UN that we see around the world.

Under the Trump administration, funding the UN was not a top priority;

due to this costly decision, the U.S. currently owes \$1.1 billion peacekeeping arrears and \$90 for human rights work. The Biden administration recently introduced a preliminary FY2022 budget that repays these arrearages, increases funding for UN peacekeeping operations, provides funding for UN agencies like the World Health Organization, and significantly increases the U.S. contribution to the UN Green Climate Fund. While these numbers may look very large, they would only amount to 0.2% of the federal budget. The Biden administration is making fully funding the UN and paying our arrears a top priority, and we should request

Congress to support this priority. This is our “Big Ask.”

The UN is not just an international organization, but an organization that helps individuals across the U.S. and in our own communities. That is why fully funding the UN is so important, because the work of the UN affects us all, not just people thousands of miles away.

So let’s show the importance of the UN to the people in our lives and government officials alike, and speak out to your friends, set up a meeting with your elected official, let the people in your life know how important the work of the UN is to the United States and the world, and make that “Big Ask.”

The “Big Ask” and YOU!

UNA-USA is organizing a Week of Action, June 6-10, when all UNA members are encouraged to communicate the Big Ask to our Iowa Congressional delegation. The week will kick off on June 6 and 7 with virtual programming; on June 8, we will have virtual meetings with the offices of Senators Ernst and Grassley; and on June 9 we will have virtual meetings with

our members of the House of Representatives.

To take part, please register by texting “Week of Action” to 30644. UNA members have also received emails from UNA-USA with registration information. Details about the Week of Action will be sent to you after you register.

Please contact your members of

Congress prior to the Week of Action to urge them to support the administration’s request to fully fund UN peacekeeping and Regular Budget dues. Share with them why the UN is important to *you*. See the contact information on page 4.

Learn more about the “Big Ask” and how to be a UN Advocate at: unausa.org/advocacy-resources

Their Name is *Today*:

How Can We Support Unaccompanied Minors?

by Jane Shuttleworth

The situation of unaccompanied minors at the U.S./Mexico border has grabbed state and national attention. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Control (CBP), in Fiscal Year 2021 through February, 29,792 unaccompanied children and single minors have been encountered along the Southwest Border. Children are being held in crowded conditions without proper nutrition, health care, water, or sunlight.

Senator Grassley and Representative Hinton traveled to the border and pronounced the situation a humanitarian crisis. However, Governor Reynolds refused a request from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement to receive children in need of shelter. Her position contradicts Iowa's long history of welcoming refugees and immigrants including the years just after the Vietnam War when Iowa's then governor, Robert Ray, encouraged Southeast Asian refugees to move to Iowa.

The Governor's rationale for refusing shelter and care for the children is that "it is President Biden's problem." Is this really President Biden's problem?

In the short view, the early 2021 influx may be due to Biden's reversal of Title 42, a controversial Trump administration policy put in place during the pandemic which, citing public health concerns, al-

lowed the US government to expel unaccompanied minors who came to the border without giving them a chance to seek asylum. The policy remains in place for families.

In the long view, the numbers of unaccompanied minors was already surging prior to the Biden administration, reaching a record high of 76,020 in 2019 under Trump despite his administration's more aggressive deterrence policies. This jump in numbers prompted a study by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ascertain children's reasons for leaving their countries and their need for refugee status.

The study was designed to be representative and statistically significant for policy recommendations, and it analyzed the children's responses to two questions: Why are they leaving their countries of origin? Are any of them in need of international protection?

The study found two main protection-related reasons for children leaving their countries: violence by organized armed criminal actors including drug cartels, gangs, and State actors, and violence in the home. A third category, found only among the children from Mexico, was recruitment and exploitation in the criminal human smuggling industry.

The central conclusion of the UNCHR study is that given the

high rate (58%) of children who expressed actual or potential needs for protection, all unaccompanied and separated children from these four countries must be screened for international protection.

What can we do? While both the problem and solutions are complicated, the children cannot wait. They must be processed as soon as possible and reunited with their family or sponsors. Reach out to Governor Reynolds and ask her to reverse her decision and continue Iowa's long tradition of a welcoming and compassionate state. Remind her of the benefits of accepting immigrants: they become workers, taxpayers, and eventually citizens. Educate and ask your state and federal representatives to improve coordination and capacity for care of detained children using proven community-based non-detention strategies. As the poet Gabriela Mistral wrote:

Many things we need can wait.
The child cannot. Right now is
the time;
His bones are being formed,
his senses are being
developed.
His blood is being made.
To him, we cannot answer,
"Tomorrow:
His name is Today".

Email Gov. Reynolds:
<https://governor.iowa.gov/contact>

Global Warming and Migrations

by Jozef Figa

The derecho that hit Cedar Rapids destroyed apartment buildings that housed immigrants from Micronesia. The immigrants from Micronesia represent a growing category of migrants: global-warming migrants.

Micronesia has been experiencing the effects of global warming: Ris-

ing tides, soil erosion, the contamination of groundwaters, the loss of fisheries, and crop damage. Micronesians have been forced to leave their island homes and many have migrated to the U.S. under the terms of an agreement that allows them to move to this country in recognition of American testing of nuclear weapons in the Bikini Atoll

decades ago.

Climate change is also a major factor in emigration from Central America. A drought lasting from 2014 to 2016 has created a “Dry Corridor” stretching across Southern Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Western Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. These countries contribute very little to global warming but are disproportionately bearing its brunt. Western Honduras will most likely become a climate “hot spot,” that is, an area that will experience more intense effects of climate change than the rest of Central America. Because of this, the World Bank predicts that by 2050 there will be 4 million climate change emigrants from Central America and Mexico. The International Organization for Migration anticipates that between 25 million and 1 billion people will be displaced because of climate change by mid-century.

The UN is trying to help the growing number of climate migrants. For example, the World Food Program has been providing food assistance in the Dry Corridor of Central America. Refugees fleeing conflict and oppression are on the front lines of climate change, and the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, is assisting refugees impacted by drought in Somalia, cyclones in Mozambique, and increasingly harsh winters in Syria. One way we can help is to urge the U.S. to provide support to the UN and its agencies, as described on page 1.

Building Generation Equality

by Nancy Porter

UN Women, the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, convened the Generation Equality Forum, held in Mexico City March 29-31. Co-hosted by the governments of Mexico and France, the event was chaired by U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris. Drawing on knowledge and the interaction of governments, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector, the Forum created six action coalitions:

* Informing and working against gender-based violence;

* Economic justice and rights;

* Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights;

* Feminist action for climate justice;

* Technology and innovation for gender equality; and

* Feminist movements and leadership.

The Forum will hold a second session in Paris, June 30 – July 2.

For more information, including a recording of the March session, please visit :

forum.generationequality.org

UNA Student Advocates at UI Call on Turkey to Rejoin the Istanbul Convention

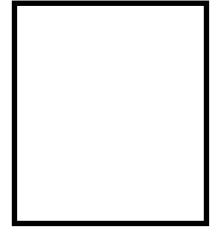
The UNA-USA student chapter at the University of Iowa recently organized a lobbying day to call on Turkish President Erdogan to recommit to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention. Turkey withdrew from the treaty on the grounds that it threatens traditional values. We can join our student colleagues in this effort.

Email President Erdogan at: contact@tccb.gov.tr

Advocacy News

Iowa United Nations Association
20 East Market St
Iowa City, IA 52245

May 2021



Address Service Requested

How to Contact Your Member of Congress

President Joe Biden (D)

1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20006
www.whitehouse.gov/contact

Senator Charles Grassley (R)

135 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3744
www.grassley.senate.gov/contact

Senator Joni Ernst (R)

111 Russell Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3254
www.ernst.senate.gov/public/

District 1: Representative

Ashley Hinson (R)

1429 Longworth House Office
Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2911
hinson.house.gov/contact

District 2: Representative

Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R)

1716 Longworth House Office
Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-6576
millermeeks.house.gov/contact

District 3: Representative

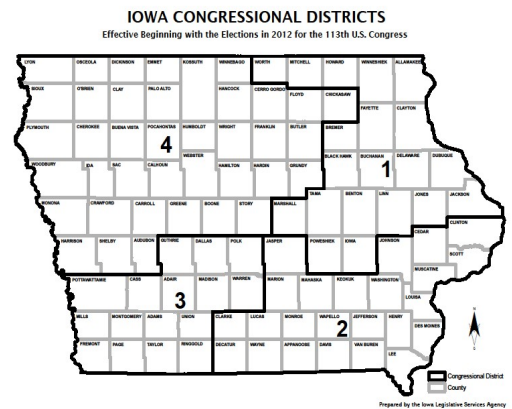
Cindy Axne (D)

1034 Longworth House Office
Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-5476
axne.house.gov/email-me

District 4: Representative

Randy Feenstra (R)

1440 Longworth House Office
Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4426
Feenstra.house.gov/contact



Write your Members of Congress

It is important
to let them know your opinions!

GO GREEN!

If you would like to receive issues of Advocacy News electronically, please send an email to debra@unaioowa.org and ask for the electronic version. We will continue to send you a paper version unless we hear from you.