

JIM BANKS
THIRD DISTRICT, INDIANA



COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
STRATEGIC COMPETITION
BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1403

March 8, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Secretary Blinken,

I write to you today regarding the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Travel Loan Program, which the U.S. State Department offers to recipients on behalf of the IOM. As you know, the Travel Loan Program offers penalty and interest-free loans to refugees and Special Immigrant Visa holders (SIVs) arriving in the United States at the expense of American taxpayers.

According to the IOM website, these extremely favorable loans are funded by the State Department, which operates agreements with private non-profits to see through their repayments. The nonprofits, known as resettlement agencies, collect loan payments, in some cases reportedly netting up to 25 percent of total payments.

While IOM claims that these loans will be repaid, there are several potential exceptions that can be made. Refugees can have their monthly repayments deferred, reduced, or forgiven for several reasons, including if they experience unemployment or bankruptcy. The only incentive that IOM lists for repayment is a better credit score. There are no penalties for failure to repay publicly listed on IOM's website.

In order to shed light on this administration's refugee resettlement policies, I request that you provide my office with answers to the following questions no later than March 22, 2024:

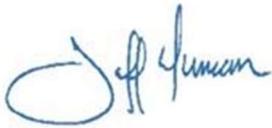
- How many loans has the State Department issued as part of the Travel Loan Program between January 20, 2021, and March 5, 2024?
- In fiscal year 2023 alone, more than \$2.9 billion was appropriated for the Department of State's migration assistance fund. How much has the State Department spent on interest- and penalty-free loans for refugees and SIVs between January 20, 2021, and March 5, 2024?
- Between January 20, 2021, and March 5, 2024, what is the average loan issued per recipient via the Travel Loan Program?
- What is the numerical breakdown on country of origin for refugees and SIVs who received travel loans between January 20, 2021, and March 5, 2024?
- Of the loans issued from January 20, 2021, to March 05, 2024, how many travel loan repayments have been forgiven, deferred, or reduced? What is the net value of those figures?
- How many resettlement agencies does the State Department partner with in collecting loan payments for travel loans?
- How does the State Department select resettlement agencies with which to partner? What does that process entail?
- What is the range of proportions of repayments that these agencies collect from refugees and SIVs who hold loans?



Jim Banks
Member of Congress



Marjorie Taylor Greene
Member of Congress



Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress