How State Legislators Can Support Ukraine & Ukrainian Refugees
Women Legislators’ Lobby Issue Brief
April 2022

Background

● The ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine has been devastating and demands our care and attention. Recent polling shows that a substantial majority of Americans (65%) are opposed to sending U.S. troops into the fight, however a majority also want the Administration to do more to support Ukraine.

● One policy option we strongly oppose is increasing the Pentagon budget to record levels. For all the challenges posed by the Ukraine crisis, a lack of U.S. military money is simply NOT one of them. Increasing the Pentagon budget even further will not save lives or make people more secure in Ukraine or the United States.

Tops ways to take action

Advocate for systems to support Ukrainian refugees and all refugee seekers

● State funding for resettlement infrastructure is crucial. We’re hearing that many Ukrainians will be coming in via humanitarian parole and not eligible for resettlement benefits (unless Congress provides the authorization for them to), so it will most likely be up to the states to help get funding out to service providers to provide basic needs.

● State legislators can lobby the Administration to rebuild the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Our partners at CWS Global have created a useful one pager of policy recommendations.

● Advocate to immediately designate Special Student Relief (SSR) to protect Ukrainian students in the United States.

Suspend state gas taxes

● Maryland has suspended gas taxes for 30 days. Georgia has suspended gas tax until the end of May. Connecticut became the most recent state to enact new legislation on the issue, pausing its 25 cent per gallon gas tax from April 1 until June 30.

● California, Illinois, Michigan, and other states have considered gas tax suspension, but have not passed legislation. California will instead give a $400 gas tax “rebate” to every household with a car registered in the state, up to two cars per family.

● The Politico/Morning Consult poll found that nearly three-quarters (73%) of Americans want the tax suspended, including majorities of both Democrats (75%) and Republicans (77%).

Divest from Russian entities

● California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Colorado, New York, and Illinois have announced plans to have their public employee pension funds either divest their holdings from Russian-controlled investment vehicles or cease any new investments into those entities.

● Governors in Ohio and Iowa have ordered Russian-made items to be pulled from store shelves, while North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper (D) issued an executive order directing government agencies and departments to review all existing contracts and operations and to terminate any agreements or operations that directly benefit Russian entities.

● Several states, including New Hampshire, Ohio and Utah, are removing Russian vodka from the shelves at state-operated stores (The ban is symbolic because despite Russia’s reputation for producing vodka, its product amounts to only 1.2 percent of sales in the United States).
State Legislatures & Ukraine in the News

- [How can you help people in Ukraine from California? A Ukrainian lawmaker has some ideas](#)
- [Gov. Wolf Calling On State Legislators To Provide Funding For Ukrainian Refugee Support](#)
- [Illinois GOP Leader to Propose Bill to Aid Ukrainian Refugees](#)
- [State senate passes resolution for Ukrainian refugees](#)
- [Mass. House resolution calls for helping resettle Ukrainian refugees](#)