



## Only 30 Percent of Aliens Admitted Under Obama “Minors” Program Are Minors

Only 480 (or 30 percent) of the 1,600 aliens who have traveled to the United States under the Obama administration’s Central American Minors (CAM) program are actually minors — that is, under the age of 18.

The State Department provided these figures in a November 30 e-mail to MRCTV, a hosting site sponsored by the Media Research Center. The report from State also noted that, so far, more than 10,600 Central Americans from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador have applied for refugee status or humanitarian parole under the CAM program.



The State Department posted a fact sheet from its Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration on November 14, 2014, explaining that the United States was “establishing an in-country refugee/parole program in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to provide a safe, legal, and orderly alternative to the dangerous journey that some children are currently undertaking to the United States.”

The notice continued:

This program will allow certain parents who are lawfully present in the United States to request access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for their children still in one of these three countries. Children who are found ineligible for refugee admission but still at risk of harm may be considered for parole on a case-by-case basis. The refugee/parole program will not be a pathway for undocumented parents to bring their children to the United States, but instead, the program will provide certain vulnerable, at-risk children an opportunity to be reunited with parents lawfully resident in the United States.

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A report from CNSNews the same day that the government announced the program cited a State Department news release explaining that if a Central American child is approved for admission into the United States, the child’s parent(s) must sign a form agreeing to repay the cost of his or her travel to the United States.

“Approved refugees will be eligible for the same support provided to all refugees resettled in the United States, including assignment to a resettlement agency that will assist with reception and placement, and assistance registering children in school,” the news release said.

The obvious question now is: If the CAM program was intended only for children, why have 70 percent of those entering the United States under the program been adults?

The answer to that question is found in an article posted by MRCTV last August, which reported that



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on December 4, 2016

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the Obama administration had expanded the CAM program to “allow illegal alien adults to be fast-tracked to the United States.” The report noted:

The [CAM] program failed to gain much traction, however, as the more lengthy process proved less appealing and slightly more restrictive than simply crossing into the United States from Mexico. Only about 9,500 applications have been received since the program launched, according to the most recent data.

But now, the Obama administration says it will expand its alien children program to include parents of Central American kids living in the U.S., related “caregivers” (i.e., miscellaneous family members) and any children older than 21 — basically, anyone *actual children*. [Italics in original.]

The Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) — a non-profit research organization that focuses on immigration-related issues — posted an article last August about the administration’s expansion of CAM. The CIS report stated:

In our opinion, this recent expansion of “refugee resettlement opportunities” is not about protecting children and vulnerable populations (who, to begin with, do not qualify as refugees) but about providing, and paying for, a legal path to Central Americans who want to come to the United States and join their family members. This disguised vehicle for family reunification has grown wider as additional categories of family members (adult children, parents, and even “caregivers”) are now able to participate in the program and move into the United States.

The report also provided an explanation for why the CAM program (prior to the expansion) had received only 9,500 applications since being started, noting that program’s numerous conditions (DNA tests, background checks, medical clearance, etc.) dissuaded some from applying.

However, a more significant factor limiting applications, observed CIS, was that the majority of the Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran immigrants present in the United States are here illegally, which makes them ineligible to participate.

When it was first created, the stated goal of CAM was bring Central American minors safely to their parents in the United States. This was sold as a humanitarian measure, designed to eliminate the need for these minors to make the long, dangerous trek all the way through Mexico to the U.S. border.

However, noted CIS, the expansion of the program created an entirely new situation:

In other words, individuals from El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras who made it to the U.S. — illegally for the most part — can now have their extended family members flown to them with U.S. taxpayers’ money. And those on the other side, who considered crossing here illegally, could be spared the trouble and given legal status. This seems to be this administration’s idea of enforcing immigration laws.

The MRCTV report, citing an e-mail from the State Department, noted that more than 10,600 Central Americans from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador have applied for refugee status or humanitarian parole under the CAM program, to date. If the current ratio of adults-to-children continues, 7,400 of those will be adults and not minors, for whom the program was originally created.

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