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Asylum Seekers and Advocates Discuss Fight for Work Permits Following Oral Arguments in *CASA v. Mayorkas* Case

Listen to a Recording of Today's Press Call [Here](#)

(Greenbelt, MD) – On a press call today, asylum seekers and advocates discussed the importance of work permits for asylum seekers and where efforts stand in the fight to protect the ability of asylum seekers to work legally. The call featured remarks from the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP), the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), and an affected ASAP member.

The call followed virtual oral arguments held in [CASA de Maryland v. Mayorkas](#), a lawsuit pending in the U.S. District Court of Maryland. The case challenges Trump-era rules that significantly restrict, if not eliminate altogether, the ability of asylum seekers to legally work in the U.S. while they wait for their asylum cases to be adjudicated. The Biden administration has continued to defend these Trump-era policies in court and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas has ratified one of the two rules being litigated. During today's hearing, Judge Paula Xinis poignantly asked whether "it was really the government's position that there is no Congressional pronouncement that asylum is a core value of this country?"

Dayana Vera de Ponte, asylum seeker and member of ASAP, said, "Being able to work and get a social security number has been the most important thing that has happened to my family since we fled oppression in Venezuela seeking liberty. I hope that the government stops defending these anti-immigrant policies that make it difficult for asylum seekers to obtain a work permit. I hope the U.S. government and the judge in this case can know that we as asylum seekers are working to support our families, helping the communities where we live, and helping the economy of this country. Without a work permit, we do not have the liberty we came to the U.S. in search of."

Linda Evarts, Senior Supervising Attorney at IRAP, said, “Removing the barriers to accessing work permits set by these rules would be a clear statement that the government is not above the law and must follow the bare minimum procedural requirements when it issues new rules. We are hopeful that the court will send this message to the government and restore all asylum seekers’ access to work authorization.”

Zachary Manfredi, Litigation and Advocacy Director at ASAP, said, “We continue to stand with the more than 225,000 ASAP members who have made it clear that the ability to work is essential to them. Asylum seekers need work permits to be able to support themselves and their families — to earn a living and pay for rent, food, and other necessities. Importantly, work permits also allow asylum seekers to get a social security number and unlock access to health insurance during the pandemic. Especially during this unprecedented labor shortage, the Biden administration should not still be defending these anti-immigrant policies. Instead, the government should be making it easier, not harder, for asylum seekers to work legally. We hope that the ultimate decision in this case will restore asylum seekers’ access to lawful work, and, as the Judge today stated, reaffirm that asylum is a “core value” to this country.”

BACKGROUND

- To learn more about the case, visit IRAP’s [website](#).
- For information about what is at stake in the decision, visit ASAP’s [website](#).
- Read more about the preliminary injunction in the case [here](#).

The Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP) believes that asylum seekers can make great change by standing together. We provide our membership of asylum seekers with legal and community support. And we work with our members — over 200,000 asylum seekers — to build a more welcoming United States. ASAP members come from more than 175 countries and live in every U.S. state and territory. To learn more, visit our website:

<https://www.asylumadvocacy.org/>.

The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) develops and enforces a set of legal and human rights for refugees and displaced persons. Mobilizing direct legal aid, litigation, and systemic advocacy, IRAP serves the world’s most persecuted individuals and empowers the next generation of human rights leaders. To learn more, visit our website:

<https://refugeerights.org/>.

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