

HR 2946

Safe Zones Act of 2023

Congress: 118 (2023–2025, Ended)

Chamber: House

Policy Area: Immigration

Introduced: Apr 27, 2023

Current Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement.

Latest Action: Referred to the Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement. (Apr 27, 2023)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2946>

Sponsor

Name: Rep. Gonzalez, Vicente [D-TX-34]

Party: Democratic • State: TX • Chamber: House

Cosponsors

No cosponsors are listed for this bill.

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Homeland Security Committee	House	Referred to	Apr 27, 2023
Judiciary Committee	House	Referred To	Apr 27, 2023

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Immigration

Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

## Safe Zones Act of 2023

This bill makes changes to procedures relating to seeking asylum, including by establishing facilities outside of the United States to accept and process refugee applications to the United States.

Specifically, the Department of State must establish *safe zones* that accept applications for asylum from individuals who are nationals of (1) the country where that safe zone is located, or (2) a country next to the country where the safe zone is located. The State Department must establish at least three safe zones along the U.S.-Mexico border and one safe zone in Guatemala.

For each safe zone, the State Department must (1) ensure that it is fortified from danger; (2) provide temporary housing for individuals with pending applications; (3) provide adequate meals; and (4) provide access to various services, including medical services. The bill also imposes various requirements related to safe zones, including deadlines for processing applications.

The bill expands the definition of *asylum officer* (i.e., officers who conduct initial credible fear reviews to determine whether an asylum seeker's application may proceed) to include trained and qualified staff as determined by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). (In 2020, a federal court ruled that DHS may not use U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents to conduct such interviews.)

The bill also requires the hiring of additional border patrol agents and immigration judges.

## Actions Timeline

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- **Apr 27, 2023:** Introduced in House
- **Apr 27, 2023:** Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.
- **Apr 27, 2023:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement.