



U N I T E D
STATELESS

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United Stateless Applauds Reintroduction of Sen. Ben Cardin and Rep. Jamie Raskin's "Stateless Protection Act"

—First piece of U.S. legislation focused on granting stateless people their human right to a nationality.

—218,000 stateless people or "citizens of nowhere" live in the US.

—The bill would end needless suffering related to identity, travel documents, employment barriers, detention, and more.

(Washington, D.C., March 20, 2024 for immediate release). —United Stateless, a national organization led by stateless people, applauds the reintroduction of Sen. Ben Cardin and Rep. Jamie Raskin's "Stateless Protection Act" ([Text of the Stateless Protection Act can be downloaded here](#)) which will resolve the status of stateless persons in the United States.

In addition to Cardin and Raskin, leading the bill introduction are **Senator Dick Durbin (D-Ill.)**, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, **Senator Alex Padilla (D-Calif.)**, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and Border Safety, and **Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-Va.-11)**, of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Conflicts and crises around the world have left 218,000 people in America without a country. "Stateless" people are often referred to as "citizens of nowhere" as no state recognizes them as their own. In August 2023, Stateless advocates around the world celebrated a huge win as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas and Director Ur Jaddou [recognized the situation of stateless people](#) stuck in legal limbo in this country, saying they will consider statelessness in discretionary adjudications.

The Stateless Protection Act would enshrine protections for stateless people into law. Every stateless person in America has a different story. But they all share similar frustrations and fears. Stateless people often lack identity documents like birth certificates and passports. Without these documents, stateless people often can't access healthcare. They can't travel or get an

education. They might find themselves homeless, poor, and marginalized. This needless suffering often triggers mental health issues like depression and severe anxiety.

“We have a responsibility to help those individuals and their family who are left with nowhere to go through no fault of their own,” **said Senator Cardin**. “Our laws need to reflect our values as a nation of immigrants and we should protect stateless people, providing them and their immediate families with the opportunity to become full citizens of the United States. I am proud to work with Congressman Raskin, Senators Durbin and Padilla, all our congressional cosponsors, and with our advocacy partners to truly address this hidden problem.”

Karina Ambartsoumian-Clough, Executive Director of United Stateless, said: “Stateless people are stuck in legal limbo in America through no fault of our own. We are veterans, holocaust survivors, business owners, and more. We are a diverse group of people linked only by our legal status. We want to get on with our lives and we salute the leadership of Sen. Ben Cardin and Rep. Jamie Raskin in helping us to do it.”

Samantha Sitterley, United Stateless Staff Attorney said: “This legislation means true stability, dignity, and humanity for more than 200,000 stateless people who live in our communities. For the stateless people served by our legal services clinic, the SPA offers hope for the future where before there was none.”

Betsy Fisher, United Stateless Advocacy Lead, said: “United Stateless is proud to have worked with federal agencies to achieve access to temporary protection for stateless people. But only Congress can provide stateless people with access to permanent legal status. We urge Congress to move this legislation forward.”

About United Stateless

United Stateless is a national organization led by stateless people. Our mission is to build and inspire community among those affected by statelessness. We also advocate for their human rights. Founded in 2018, United Stateless is the only U.S. organization dedicated to this issue. Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the beacon for our work. We hew to its vision of a world that respects everyone's human right to nationality.

Find out more about statelessness here:

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/hundreds-of-thousands-of-stateless-people-are-living-in-legal-limbo-in-the-u-s>