

Comment Text:

Dear Commissioners,

I am Atif Javed, the Executive Director of Tarjimly. Tarjimly connects asylees and refugees with translators and interpreters to help them overcome language barriers that may be preventing them from accessing needed services. I was inspired to create Tarjimly based on my own experience as an interpreter for my immigrant and refugee family, and finally decided to quit my job to build Tarjimly after the travel ban on many Muslim-majority nations was announced. Congressional control—and elections in general—dramatically affect Tarjimly and myself, and being able to access risk management tools to hedge that exposure would thus be quite beneficial. The CFTC should permit exchanges, including Kalshi, to list election contracts that further that goal.

The origin story of Tarjimly speaks to the centrality of federal policy-making to millions of people's experiences, all around the world. When the government imposes travel restrictions on countries, that can spell disaster not just for those seeking to immigrate from those banned countries, but also thousands of people currently in the United States on student or temporary visas who might have trouble returning to the US after renewing their visa. While that example does regard a presidential policy (the travel ban was imposed by President Trump), that does not negate the truth that Congress plays as well. Congress has the ability to pass comprehensive immigration reform, and change the rules that affect which people can successfully apply for asylum. Congress alone has the ability to appropriate money for various services related to refugee resettlement and integration. For example, consider H.R. 6119 (Further Extending Government Funding Act) of 2021, which was a bill passed to prevent a government shutdown. As part of the bill, Congress appropriated extra money to handle the increase of refugees from Afghanistan.¹ Specifically, it allotted an extra "\$1.3 billion to provide resettlement and other support services, such as emergency housing, English language classes, job training, and case management, for Afghan arrivals and refugees" and "\$1.2 billion for the United States Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund (ERMA) that includes basic need requirements and resettlement services for at risk Afghans in the United States, including medical testing, processing, and life support services."² As one House Appropriations Committee summary report states, "without this provision, the Office of Refugee Resettlement would be unable to appropriately care for minors in the federal government's custody."

Even a quick glance at the news headlines show the vast gulf between the two political parties on issues of refugee and asylum policy. The differences could not be more stark. While it's true that predicting precise bills from any Congress is a difficult endeavor, there are frequent government appropriations bills (such as those to prevent government shutdowns) where the majority party can assert its preferences on issues and reconciliation bills that can be passed on a straight party-line vote. Due to those bills, the state of refugee resettlement services and other crucial programs could look very different depending on who wins the election. Someone who provides contract services to refugees could see their financial health meaningfully harmed by a cut in those services. Anyone who has family abroad attempting to reach the US, as well, could be harmed. These are the electoral risks that these families, nonprofits and small businesses face. To these people, elections are not a game. The CFTC should not treat it as such, and should permit the ability to purchase risk management tools to mitigate that exposure by legalizing election event contracts.

1. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/6119/text>

2. <https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/Further%20Extending%20Government%20Funding%20Act%20Summary.pdf>

3. <https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/Further%20Extending%20Government%20Funding%20Act%20Summary.pdf>