

Government seeks change to order lifting Trump refugee ban

SEATTLE (AP) — Lawyers with the Department of Justice have asked a federal judge to change his order that partially lifted a Trump administration refugee ban.

Just before Christmas, U.S. District Judge James Robart in Seattle imposed a nationwide injunction that blocks restrictions on reuniting refugee families and partially lifted a ban on refugees from 11 mostly Muslim countries.

The government does not want to include resettlement agencies.

Government lawyers filed a motion Wednesday saying that although the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has interpreted the "bona fide relationship" to include connections to resettlement agencies, the U.S. Supreme Court has stayed that ruling.

Attorneys for refugee support organization HIAS and Jewish Family Service say the government's claims are wrong.

"The Supreme Court was clear in its earlier order protecting refugees with bona fide relationships



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson, File

In this Dec. 21 photo, Mariko Hirose, right, a litigation director at the Urban Justice Center, addresses reporters as Mark Hetfield, president & CEO of HIAS, left, and Rabbi Will Berkowitz, Jewish Family Service of Seattle CEO, look on in front of a federal courthouse after speaking with media in Seattle.

to the US from the last temporary refugee ban," Mark Hetfield, president and CEO of New York-based HIAS, said Thursday. "Yet in its latest ban, the Trump administration not only ignored this admonition, but went even further to explicitly prevent refugees in the U.S. from reuniting with their

spouse or minor children." The refugee organizations and the American Civil Liberties Union filed two lawsuits, consolidated into one, challenging the Trump administration's refugee ban. The ACLU represents a Somali man who has spent years trying to bring his wife and children to his

home in Washington state. Jewish Family Service challenged the administration's prohibition of refugees from certain countries until the vetting process could be reviewed. Department of Justice lawyers argued in a hearing last week that the ban was a temporary and

reasonable way for agencies to deal with gaps in the screening process. But ACLU and Jewish Family Service lawyers said the government violated federal law when it implemented the ban. Robart agreed, and also said the refugee ban violated the Immigration and Nationality Act passed by Congress.

Mariko Hirose, a lawyer on the Jewish Family Service case and litigation director for International Refugee Assistance Project, said the Trump administration has attacked refugee resettlement since the first travel ban, leaving vulnerable refugees in limbo.

The plaintiffs include two Iraqi men who served as interpreters for the U.S. Army and are said to be in "extreme danger" because of their work. Other plaintiffs include an Iraqi woman who was kidnapped, raped and threatened with death for her work with an American company and a transgender woman in Egypt who faces harassment and persecution. They all were in the process of coming to the U.S. when the executive order went into effect.

In the motion filed Wednesday, government lawyers cited the Supreme Court's three stay orders on previous Trump travel bans as evidence the high court disagrees with letting the bona fide relationship include refugee resettlement agencies or humanitarian organizations.

BRIEFLY

Trump administration rescinding rules for oil, gas drilling

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — President Donald Trump's administration is rescinding proposed rules for hydraulic fracturing and other oil- and gas-drilling practices on government lands.

The U.S. Department of the Interior announced Thursday the rescission would take effect Friday.

The rules developed under President Barack Obama would have applied to drilling on federal lands located mainly in the West. They were set to take effect in 2015 but a judge in Wyoming sided with petroleum industry

groups and blocked them at the last minute. In September, the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver declined to rule in that case because the Trump administration intended to rescind the rules.

The rules would have required companies to disclose chemicals used in fracking, the process of pumping pressurized water underground to break open hydrocarbon deposits.

Jones officially declared winner over Roy Moore

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Democrat Doug Jones' historic victory over Republican Roy Moore was declared official

Thursday as Alabama election officials certified him the winner of the special Senate election, despite Moore's last-minute lawsuit claiming voter fraud.

Jones defeated Moore on Dec. 12 by 21,924 votes in a stunning victory in a traditionally red state, becoming the first Alabama Democrat elected to the Senate victory in a quarter-century. The win came after Moore, best known for stands against gay marriage and the public display of the Ten Commandments, was dogged by accusations of sexual misconduct involving teenage girls that occurred decades ago.

Jones said in a statement that he looked forward to going to work for the people of Alabama in the new year.

Jones will be sworn in on Jan.

3, narrowing the GOP's advantage in the U.S. Senate to 51-49. He takes over the seat previously held by Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

'Obamacare' sign-up tally dips to 8.7M

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 8.7 million people signed up for coverage next year under the Obama-era health care law, the government reported Thursday, as the program that President Donald Trump has repeatedly pronounced "a disaster" exceeded expectations.

The final tally for the 39 HealthCare.gov states showed about 80,000 fewer sign-ups than an initial count provided last week, before the Christmas holiday. A spokesman for the Centers for

Medicare and Medicaid Services said the slight dip was due to late cancellations.

Still, HealthCare.gov enrollment reached nearly 95 percent of last year's level, outperforming projections in a show of consumer demand, despite a shortened sign-up season and big cuts in the ad budget.

Ahead of open enrollment, analysts had predicted somewhere around 1 million to 2 million fewer people would sign up for subsidized private coverage through the Affordable Care Act.

But the latest numbers indicate that new customers kept showing up as the Dec. 15 enrollment deadline closed. More than 66,000 new customers were added since the pre-Christmas enrollment report.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON & EVENING

Table with columns for time slots (12 PM, 12:30, 1 PM, 1:30, 2 PM, 2:30, 3 PM, 3:30, 4 PM, 4:30, 5 PM, 5:30, 6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS) listing programs.

DECEMBER 29, 2017

Table with columns for time slots (12 PM, 12:30, 1 PM, 1:30, 2 PM, 2:30, 3 PM, 3:30, 4 PM, 4:30, 5 PM, 5:30, 6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (A&E, AMC, ANPL, CMT, CNBC, CNN, DISC, DISN, ESPN, ESPN2, FOC, FOOD, FREE, FX, GOLDF, GSN, HALL, HGTV, HIST, LIFE, NICK, ROOT, SPIKE, SYFY, TBS, TCM, TLC, TNT, UNI, USA, WE, WGN, HBO, HBO2, HBO3, MAX, SHOW, STARZ, STZENC) listing programs.

FRIDAY LATE NIGHT & SATURDAY MORNING

Table with columns for time slots (12 AM, 12:30, 1 AM, 1:30, 2 AM, 2:30, 3 AM, 3:30, 4 AM, 4:30, 5 AM, 5:30, 6 AM, 6:30, 7 AM, 7:30, 8 AM, 8:30, 9 AM, 9:30, 10 AM, 10:30, 11 AM, 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS) listing programs.