

Lady Liberty and New York City: U.S. immigration challenges

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The Statue of Liberty, a traditional symbol for presumed American acceptance to immigration, in 2007

Jacob Sagers – New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced last week that the city is [suspending](#) its Right-to-Shelter mandate following court approval. The announcement comes as the city grapples with a financial and refugee crisis. Over 122,000 refugees have come into the city since last year alongside an estimated \$12 billion cost over the next three years as the city is grappling with a budget shortfall. Suspending the Right-to-Shelter relieves New York City of providing housing for refugees and immigrants, but also creates broader implications for immigration policy in the United States.

New York City's location, or the role it plays in the world, is partially a global financial center and historically a magnet for immigration. Images of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty permeate American history books; the city is known for immigration and diverse communities. Following Agnew's sense of place, Ellis Island, the city's shelters, and other institutions have served as an organization place for refugees within New York City, otherwise known as [locale](#). Without these locales, refugees and immigrants are left in dire situations as they try to maneuver living in a new country, finding housing, and seeking employment. It disrupts the city's sense of place, or in the way residents view the place they live. Without immigrants, the city's identity becomes disrupted, and New York City almost loses what it means to be a New Yorker.

The right-to-shelter mandate has been in place since the 1980s, but its annulment was not surprising. Given the context, American immigration policy has been a hot-button political topic for decades and has stalled in reforms. Despite broad [support](#) for system overhaul, Congress has failed to act. This forces states and cities to bear the cost. New York City is a recent example, but the [scale](#), or geographical extent of the problem, is far greater. Border states have taken controversial measures, such as Texas and Florida busing migrants to cities, to bring attention to the problem. Whether New York City's policy influences the nationwide scale is unseen; for now, it will leave thousands of migrants in limbo.

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