



# Top Asylum Official Who Was Critical Of Trump Administration Has Been Reassigned

John Lafferty, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services asylum division chief, has reportedly been “pushed out” by Ken Cuccinelli, the agency's hard-line acting director.



By Dominique Mosbergen

Sep 5, 2019, 07:30 AM EDT



VIEW COMMENTS

The top asylum official at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has reportedly been reassigned to a service center in Virginia — an apparent demotion lambasted by some immigration officials as “just another attack” by the Trump administration on the asylum system.

John Lafferty, who led the USCIS asylum division for six years, was “pushed out” this week by Ken Cuccinelli, the agency’s hard-line acting director, according to BuzzFeed, which [first reported the news](#).

The asylum division under Lafferty had long been a “source of frustration” to the Trump administration, particularly senior White House adviser Stephen Miller, [according to The Washington Post](#).

Miller — whose own great-grandfather [was a refugee](#) — has been pushing a [hard-line immigration agenda](#) since the early days of the Trump campaign. He’s sought to limit the number of asylum-seekers allowed into the U.S., allegedly even [telling former Trump aide Cliff Sims](#) that he’d “be happy if not a single refugee foot ever again touched America’s soil.”

Trump, who has made anti-immigration policies a signature of his presidency, has repeatedly railed against the U.S. asylum program, which he called a “[scam](#)” earlier this year.

Lafferty is a “pro-asylum” official who was well-liked in his division, a USCIS officer told the Post. “He clearly respected their work, and you could tell he wasn’t too enthused about the various new policies under the Trump administration.”

In July, [BuzzFeed reported](#) that Lafferty had penned a memo to staffers critical of a fast-tracked Trump administration policy that ended asylum protections for migrants who transited through another country before arriving in the U.S.

“We are once again being asked to adapt and to do so with very little time to train and prepare,” Lafferty wrote at the time. “If I didn’t know that we have some of the most dedicated, most adaptable and most talented public servants presently serving in the federal government I would be concerned about being able to implement these changes on such short notice.”

It’s unclear if the memo was linked in any way to Lafferty’s reassignment.

Starting on Sept. 10, Lafferty will become deputy director of the Potomac Service Center in Arlington, where he’ll oversee the processing of applications for permanent residency and work permits for international students, [Politico reported](#).

A USCIS spokesperson did not specifically comment on Lafferty’s reassignment, but told BuzzFeed the agency has “a mobile group of senior executives who qualify for a variety of positions.” USCIS has the authority, the spokesperson added, to move these managers to different roles to “best serve the agency.”

Several USCIS officers expressed concern at Lafferty's role change.

"This is just another attack on the asylum system," one immigration official told BuzzFeed. "To remove someone with his knowledge of and history with the program will cause damage."

Another USCIS official told the outlet that Lafferty's departure was "shocking and distressing news for the civil servants" who work in the asylum division.

That official described Lafferty as "an incredibly sophisticated, highly dedicated, and ethical leader."

According to Politico, Lafferty will be replaced in an acting capacity by Andrew Davidson, who currently runs USCIS' fraud detection unit.

---

### Support Free Journalism

[Consider supporting HuffPost](#) starting at \$2 to help us provide free, quality journalism that puts people first.

Can't afford to contribute? Support HuffPost by [creating a free account](#) and log in while you read.

SUPPORT HUFFPOST

Already contributed? [Log in to hide these messages.](#)

---

< GO TO HOMEPAGE



VIEW COMMENTS

[Suggest a correction](#) | [Submit a tip](#)

## MORE IN POLITICS

**Young Women Are Shifting Left At Historic Rates. Here's Why That's So Striking.**

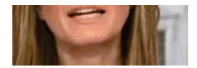


**Trump Responds To Voter's Question About Schools With A Bunch Of Utter Nonsense**



**Nicolle Wallace Says 'God Will Forgive' Trump Voters — With 1 Huge Exception**





---

**Kamala Harris To Campaign In Texas, Highlight State's Abortion Ban**



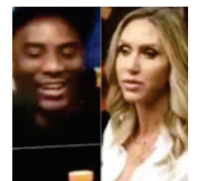
---

**Doctor Who Wrote 'Goldwater Rule' Says He Would Recommend Dementia Tests For Trump**



---

**Charlamagne Tha God Laughing At Lara Trump's Father-In-Law Claim Says It All**



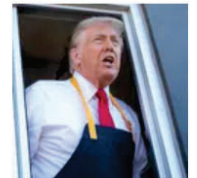
---

**Trump Once Told The Arnold Palmer Penis Story In An Even Weirder Setting: Book**



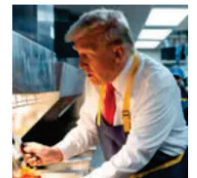
---

**Trump McDonald's Trolled With Fake Yelp Reviews: Fries 'Too Salty' From Election Tears**



---

**McDonald's Clarifies Its Position On The 2024 Election Following Trump's Visit**



---

**Kamala Harris Brings The House Down With Weed Gummies Comment**



---

**Conservative Australian Senator's Statement About Trump Supporters Hilariously Backfires**





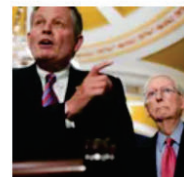
---

**On The Debate Stage, Republicans Squirm When Pressed About Abortion**



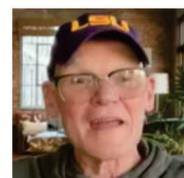
---

**Senate Republicans Boasted Of An Ultra-Favorable Map. Now The Pressure Is On.**



---

**James Carville Makes Bold Election Prediction: 'I'm Doubling Down On That'**



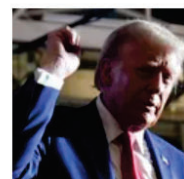
---

**In Pennsylvania, Fast-Growing Hispanic Communities Present A Test For Harris And Trump**



---

**Trump's Unexpected Christmas Complaint Has People Asking Questions**



---

**Critics Sack Trump Campaign Over Spectacular 'Freudian Slip' In Football Post**



---

**Arizona Official Who Delayed 2022 Election Certification Pleads Guilty**



---

**Tim Walz Makes 1 Crucial Promise About Liz And Dick Cheney**



---

**Fox News Decision Desk Chief Predicts When We'll Know The Winner**



---

**Former GOP Officials Urge Justice Department To Investigate Elon Musk's \$1 Million Giveaways**



---

**Harris Throws Gauntlet At Trump For Ducking Debate, Interviews: 'What Is He Hiding?'**



---

**Harris Woos Wisconsin Republicans With Liz Cheney And Charlie Sykes**



---

**National Democrats Plan \$4 Million Ad Blitz For New Jersey's Sue Altman**



---

**Press Freedom Groups Urge Biden To Demand Israel Allow Media Access In Gaza**



---

**Democrats Bought A Billboard In This Republican Texas County. Then Something Funny Happened.**



---

**Official Resigned Over Being Uncomfortable With Threats Ron DeSantis Wanted Him To Send**



---

**Tim Walz Tells 'The View' 1 Nice Thing About Trump — And It's Hilarious**



---

**Kamala Harris' Record Campaign Money Haul Laps Donald Trump In Final Weeks**



---

**Trump Supporters Are Praising Him For Doing Something Many Politicians Do**



---

**White House Proposes That Health Insurance Fully Cover Over-The-Counter Birth Control**



---

**JD Vance's Latest Defense Of Trump's Alarming Comments Is... Quite Something**



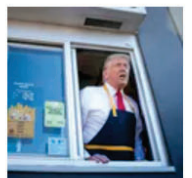
---

**Ex-GOP Lawmaker Reveals The 8-Word Message He Had For Kamala Harris When They Met**



---

**Donald Trump's Proposals Would Hurt Social Security's Finances, Analysis Finds**



---

**Blinken Heads To Mideast For 11th Time Since Gaza War As Truce Remains Uncertain**



**Donald Trump's Glorified Football Fantasy Went Too Far, Fans Say**

---



**Why Colin Allred And Ted Cruz Both Talk Up Allred's NFL Past**

---



**'Dude, You Were President': Obama Flings Trump's Line Of Attack Right Back At Him**

---



**'He Is Degrading': Trump Biographers Call Out All The Signs Of Possible Cognitive Decline**

---



**Arnold Palmer's Daughter Revealed What Her Dad Really Thought Of Trump**

---



**This Could Be A Game Changer For America's Forgotten Paradise**

---



**Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin Makes Unannounced Visit To Kyiv**

---



**Trump's Big New 'Cognitive' Boast Falls Apart In Front Of His Own Audience**

---

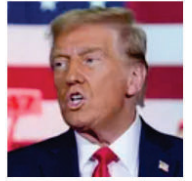




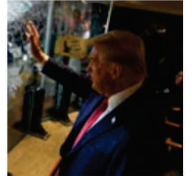
**Lindsey Graham Was Asked About 'Fascist' Trump And Lost It**



**Mary Trump Lists Exactly How 'WTF' Her Uncle's Campaign Has Become**



**NFL Fan Spoils Trump Campaign Video With 2 Brutal Salutes From The Crowd**



**Michael Steele Flags 'Most Disturbing' Part Of Trump's Arnold Palmer Penis Talk**



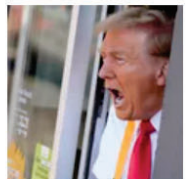
**Michael Cohen Sounds The Alarm On Concerning Changes In Trump's Behavior**



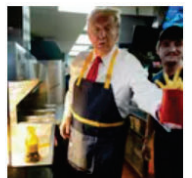
**Jake Tapper Hits Mike Johnson With Blunt Reality Check On Trump's 'Enemy Within' Comment**



**Trump Gets Clowned With Super-Sized McMemes After McDonald's Photo Op**



**'Mostly Fries': Trump Had A Busy, Greasy Day On The Campaign Trail**



**'60 Minutes' Says Trump Is Lying About Kamala Harris Interview Edit**



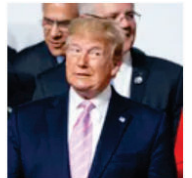
**Gov. Josh Shapiro Calls Out Elon Musk's Plan To Give \$1 Million To Voters Who Sign His Petition**



**Trump Would Be The Oldest Person To Become President. He's Not Sharing Health Details**



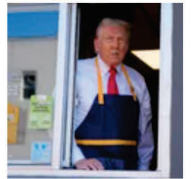
**Trump Claims To Saudi-Owned Network He Can Somehow Usher Peace In Middle East**



**Fox News Host Grills Trump Over 'Ominous' 'Enemy Within' Comments**



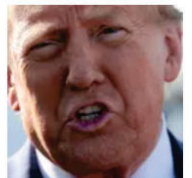
**Donald Trump Serves Food, Cooks Fries At A McDonald's In Campaign Photo Op**



**Harris Rallies Georgia's Black Churchgoers With Help Of Stevie Wonder**



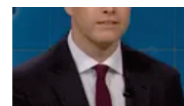
**A Fox News Host Just Fact-Checked Donald Trump About This 1 Issue — And He Was Surprised, To Say The Least**



**Trump Harris Comparison On 'Weekend Update' Couldn't**



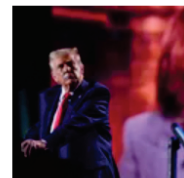
**Trump-Harris Comparison On Weekend Update Could  
Make Voters' Choice Any More Clear**



**Speaker Johnson Skirts Around Trump's Arnold Palmer Penis  
Remarks**



**Harris And Trump Seek To Win Support From Arab Americans  
In Swing State Michigan**



**Obama Says Trump 'Ignored' Pandemic Playbook He Gave To  
Him**



**Democrats Are Embracing A Taboo Issue In Heated Senate  
Races**



**Harris Says Trump Is 'Cruel' As She Spotlights Abortion  
Restrictions In Georgia During Early Voting**



**Trump Kicks Off A Pennsylvania Rally By Talking About  
Arnold Palmer's Genitalia**

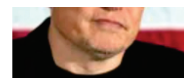


**Donald Trump Tells Supporters To Get Their 'Fat Pig'  
Husbands Off The Couch To Vote**



**Dominion 'Monitoring' Misinfo After Musk, MTG Revive  
Voting Machine Conspiracy Theories**





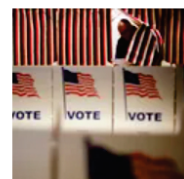
---

**North Carolina Sets New Record For Early Voter Turnout**



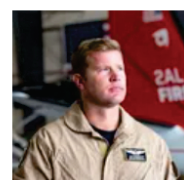
---

**The Surprising Voting Bloc That Could Protect Abortion In Red States**



---

**Montana GOP Senate Hopeful Accused Wildland Firefighters Of 'Milking' Infernos For Extra Pay**



---

**JD Vance's Most Recent Comment About His Wife Having Three Kids Is Going Viral Because People Think It's Really, Really Creepy**



---

**Republicans Duck Questions About Trump's Plan For Mass Deportations**



---

**Trump's Campaign Is Slowly Doing This More — And It's Dangerous**



---

**CNN Data Reporter Spots Key Figure Showing Harris Campaign Going In 'Wrong Direction'**



---

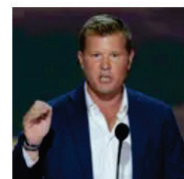
**Obama Recalls Viral Moment From 2008 Race With McCain: 'Some Values Transcend Party'**





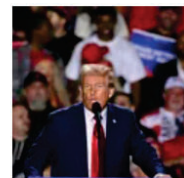
---

## Montana GOP Candidate Who Could Flip Control Of Senate Nagged By Claims He Lied About Bullet Wound



---

## Donald Trump Warns 'Economic Armageddon' Is Coming For A Key Swing State If He Loses



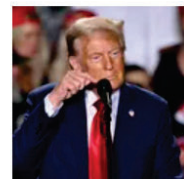
---

## Obama On Trump's Recent Odd Behavior: 'Can You Imagine If I Did That?'



---

## A Failed Mic Leaves Donald Trump Pacing The Stage In Silence For Nearly 20 Minutes



[NEWS](#)

[POLITICS](#)

[ENTERTAINMENT](#)

[LIFE](#)

[ABOUT US](#)

[ADVERTISE](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

[RSS](#)

[FAQ](#)

[VOICES](#)

[HUFFPOST PERSONAL](#)

[SHOPPING](#)

[NEWSLETTERS](#)

[CAREERS](#)

[USER AGREEMENT](#)

[COMMENT POLICY](#)

[DMCA POLICY](#)

[HUFFPOST PRESS ROOM](#)

[ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[CONSENT PREFERENCES](#)

[DO NOT SELL OR SHARE MY PERSONAL INFORMATION](#)