

September 16th, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
1236 Longworth Office
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader of the House of
Representatives
2468 Rayburn Office
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
317 Russell Office
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell,

We write to you on behalf of millions of service members, veterans, and military families spanning generations who have faithfully served our nation to urgently request that you include measures in the FY2022 Continuing Resolution which will meet our country's obligations to our wartime allies. For two decades, we fought shoulder-to-shoulder with brave Afghan allies who served with and protected American forces, fighting for the freedom of Afghanistan and its people. Now, as Taliban forces have seized control of their country in our absence, these vulnerable Afghans face persecution for having stood by us. As veterans and servicemembers, we are proud of the nation we served, and we must now act on our American ideals by welcoming those who seek refuge within our borders. We must honor the commitments we made as a nation and are now duty-bound to fulfill to the Afghans arriving in the United States. This is a time for our nation to stand up, serve, and protect.

Approximately 48,000 Afghan evacuees who were in imminent danger arrived in the United States from August 17th-September 1st, and tens of thousands more arrivals are expected in the coming weeks. We are urging you to ensure that our Afghan sisters and brothers seeking safety in the United States receive resettlement and integration services and have the chance to apply for legal permanent residence -- and to ensure that our communities have the resources they need to provide these services. Most of our new Afghan neighbors are entering the United States with humanitarian parole, which is temporary immigration relief and does not make them automatically eligible for refugee resettlement services. Refugee resettlement services are critical to ensuring that these Afghans quickly become self-reliant and integrate into American society.

We urgently request you include these important measures in the FY 2022 Continuing Resolution, that will extend refugee resettlement to the tens of thousands of Afghan arrivals. We also welcome any future principal or staff level meetings with your offices that may be appropriate.

We are calling on Members of Congress to support the following:

1. **Authorize Afghans Arriving on Humanitarian Parole to Receive Refugee Resettlement Services.** We urgently seek congressional authorization to ensure all Afghan parolees have access to the same resettlement services as refugees who are resettled through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Resettlement services include refugee medical assistance, English-language classes, housing assistance, job training, and helping children enroll in school.

2. **Appropriate Supplemental Funding to Serve Afghan Arrivals.** We are facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, and we have an opportunity to ensure that there are robust pathways to protection to help displaced Afghans. As we welcome Afghans who have been forced from their homes because of affiliation with the U.S. mission and are in life-threatening danger to safety in the United States, it is critical that the federal agencies who serve refugees and SIVs, and the communities that welcome them, have the resources they need. Congress should provide a supplementary:
 - **\$9.68 billion** for the Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) account is needed to fund the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which helps states and local communities welcome and support refugees on their path to self-sufficiency. The anomaly request asked for \$1,687,866,000 for Afghan arrivals, as well as a prorated amount based on an annualized rate of spending of \$7.99 billion for ORR's existing populations of concern, such as refugees, unaccompanied children, trafficking survivors, torture survivors, asylees, and others.
 - **\$2.2 billion** for humanitarian assistance is needed, including:
 - For the domestic reception and placement (R&P) program, administered by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) within the Department of State.
 - For overseas assistance through the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA), Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA), and/or International Disaster Assistance (IDA) accounts, including authorities that allow funds to be transferred between or merged with accounts to provide humanitarian assistance as expeditiously as possible.
 - This level is in line with the President's anomaly request.
 - **\$535 million** for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within the Department of Homeland Security to adjudicate the thousands of various immigration services needed both in the U.S. (such as employment authorization, asylum, and adjustment of status applications) and abroad (such as refugee applications), while addressing the current backlog, financial solvency, and commitment to improving customer service. This level is in line with the President's anomaly request.
 - **\$21.5 million** for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for medical support and care for Afghan arrivals and refugees. This level is in line with the President's anomaly request.
 - **\$10 million** for the Department of Justice Recognition & Accreditation and Legal Orientation Program (LOP) is needed to ensure that Afghan arrivals understand

their legal rights and obligations with a basic understanding of our immigration system.

3. **Pass an Afghan Adjustment Act.** We call on Congress to pass legislation that would allow Afghan parolees who are being evacuated from Afghanistan to have an opportunity to seek legal permanent residence. These parolees are fleeing violence and persecution and deserve an opportunity to rebuild their lives in safety -- and without the fear and limitations associated with uncertain immigration status. This is also critical because Afghans were advised to destroy documents associating them to the U.S. mission and other information that would otherwise be used to pursue an asylum claim.

Now more than ever, we have an opportunity to put American values into action by standing with our Afghan allies. We stand ready to support you, and we are asking for bold leadership to ensure that we do what is honorable and necessary in this moment.

Very respectfully,

#AfghanEvac

Allied Airlift 21

Association of Wartime Allies

Black Veterans Project

Florida Veterans for Common Sense Inc.

High Ground Veterans Advocacy

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

Military Spouse Behavioral Health Clinicians

Military Veterans in Journalism

Minority Veterans of America

PROMOTE

Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft

Sierra Club

Student Veterans of America

The American Legion

The Lamia Afghan Foundation

Union Veterans Council, AFL-CIO

United Soldiers and Sailors of America

Veterans for American Ideals

Veterans for Common Sense

Vets4Afghans

Women Veteran Social Justice Inc

For a full list of signatories please use this link: [Organizational Signatories](#)

CC:

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
U. S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510