

December 18, 2022

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 the bipartisan Afghan Adjustment Act and related provisions in the upcoming FY2023 Omnibus Appropriations package which will meet our country's obligations to our wartime allies without further delay.

We have a code in the US military, "no one left behind." 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. Last year, when the Taliban forces seized control of the country, our Afghan allies faced and continue to face persecution for having stood by us. Many of us made personal commitments to our allies, and we believe that the United States has a sacred obligation to the people of Afghanistan. We must honor the promises we made as a nation and are duty-bound to fulfill. Failure to do so already calls into question this nation's ability to adhere to our code and our values. We must provide genuine and lasting protection to the Afghans who have made it safely to the United States and to those who have been left behind. The longer we go without meeting this promise, the more our moral injuries fester.

Currently, Afghans who were brought to safety during the military evacuation and admitted to the United States under temporary humanitarian parole have protection for a maximum of two years – set to expire in August/September of this coming year. These wartime evacuees can only pursue a means to stay here long-term with lawful permanent residence through the asylum system or, for a discrete population of allies, the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program. Both options face severe backlogs, long processing times, and logistical obstacles for Afghans who were brought to the United States under emergency circumstances. Congress has passed similar adjustment legislation in the wake of other wartime evacuations and humanitarian crises, including the Vietnam War.

We urgently request you include these important measures in the FY 2023 Omnibus Appropriations package. We are calling on Congress to support the following:

**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 lawful permanent residence.

**After completing additional vetting required during the adjustment application process, the Afghan Adjustment Act's pathway to status adjustment would provide eligible Afghans in need of protection with stability as they continue to rebuild their lives in the United States.**

Specifically, the Afghan Adjustment Act would:

- Allow Afghans on temporary humanitarian status in the U.S. who submit to additional security vetting and an in-person interview to apply for permanent lawful status.
- Establish an Interagency Task Force, led by the U.S. Department of State, responsible for creating and implementing a strategy to continue the relocation and resettlement of eligible Afghan partners from Afghanistan over the next ten years.
- Require the U.S. Department of State to implement an office capable of reviewing visa applications and providing other consular services for Afghans as long as there is no operational embassy in Afghanistan.
- Require the U.S. Department of State to respond to congressional inquiries related to SIV applications or U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) referrals.
- Expand SIV eligibility for Afghans who worked and served alongside U.S. forces, including members of the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command, the Afghan Air Force, the Female Tactical Teams of Afghanistan, and the Special Mission Wing of Afghanistan.

We promised to stand by our allies, those who served in uniform and those who we championed to publicly defend women's and democratic rights, often at risk to themselves and their families. The U.S. government made that promise as well and keeping it assures that the American handshake still means something. A promise on which, like us, the next generation of military service members lives will rely.

Very respectfully,

The American Legion  
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)  
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)  
Student Veterans of America  
With Honor Action