

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 25, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

As concerned Members of the California congressional delegation, we write to express our urgent concern for the safe relocation of Afghan refugees and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants and voice our strong support for the placement of these vulnerable individuals fleeing Afghanistan in our state. We are indebted to our Afghan partners, many of whom aided the U.S. military and diplomatic efforts as translators, drivers, contractors, and allies in the region. They saved American lives, and it is of the utmost importance that we utilize every tool at our disposal to protect them and provide them safe harbor.

Since 2001, over 60,000 Afghan national military and police have given their lives to protect our freedom. Countless Afghan interpreters, cultural advisors, journalists, and other partners have served alongside American troops over the past two decades, putting their lives at risk for our soldiers. Now those individuals face persecution and death threats from the Taliban because of their service with our country. It is incumbent upon us to protect our Afghan partners and their families by ensuring their safe and rapid evacuation from Afghanistan.

Since October 2020, California has taken in more Afghan refugees than any other state, providing safe refuge for thousands of vulnerable citizens fleeing Afghanistan. Governor Gavin Newsom has announced his commitment to embrace refugees suffering through horrific events in Afghanistan, declaring California “a state of refuge.” We support this stance unequivocally.

We join this call and that of numerous California-based non-governmental organizations to protect vulnerable Afghans seeking refuge in our state. It is our moral obligation to immediately and efficiently relocate vulnerable Afghans, including women and children, activists, human rights defenders, parliamentarians, journalists, and other highly visible individuals currently at risk. As the State Department, in partnership with the Department of Defense, continues to evacuate and relocate individuals in imminent danger to the United States, we offer our support for the safe relocation of Afghan refugees and SIV applicants to California.

California is prepared to continue to serve as a safe harbor for individuals fleeing violence. We cannot abandon our Afghan partners while their homes, families, and very lives are under threat. It is our duty as Americans to uphold the values of our country and leverage all available resources to protect those individuals who repeatedly risked their lives for our troops.

We look forward to hearing more on your administration's plans to relocate Afghan refugees and SIV applicants to our state, and the entire country, and thank you for your close attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Ted Lieu
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

Pete Aguilar

Nanette Diaz Barragán

Karen Bass

Julia Brownley

Tony Cárdenas

Judy Chu

J. Luis Correa

Mark DeSaulnier

Anna G. Eshoo

Jimmy Gomez

Jared Huffman

Ro Khanna

Barbara Lee

Zoe Lofgren

Alan S. Lowenthal

Jerry McNerney

Grace F. Napolitano

Scott H. Peters

Lucille Roybal-Allard

Linda T. Sánchez

Mike Levin

Juan Vargas