

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20515

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to express our unwavering support for the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program for Afghan and Iraqi civilians who assisted the United States in the Global War on Terrorism and commend your recent actions to support this program.

As you know, the United States employed thousands of local Afghan and Iraqi translators following the September 11th terror attacks. Unfortunately, these men, women, and their families now face death threats from ISIS, the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other hostile groups because of their service to the U.S. and our allies. That is why Congress created the SIV program, which provides a life-saving path to safety for those who worked alongside U.S. troops, diplomats, and contractors.

The SIV program has had bipartisan support from Congress, previous administrations, prominent military leaders, diplomats, and national security experts—including Gen. John Nicholson, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, Gen. David Petraeus, and Amb. Ryan Crocker. And while the program has provided refuge to some of our Afghan and Iraqi partners, there is more work to be done. Thousands of Afghans and Iraqis are still waiting for their visas to be processed.

Pursuant to Sec. 602(b) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 (8 U.S.C. 1101), the executive branch is mandated to vet and process SIV visas within a 9-month period. Currently, they are failing that task and thereby jeopardizing the lives of our loyal wartime allies. We encourage your administration to prioritize the vetting and processing of these life-saving visas to comply with the Congressionally mandated timeline. Additionally, we encourage your administration to implement Congressional changes in the law in a timely manner. For instance, the Department of State continues to deny and delay qualified SIV applicants based on a “sensitive and trusted” requirement which Section 1219 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 explicitly removed.

In closing, we request that you and your administration open regular lines of communication with Congress and non-governmental organizations that work with SIV applicants to have a constructive dialogue about best paths forward to support this program. We stand ready to work with your administration to ensure that the Special Immigrant Visa program offers protection to the allies who served honorably alongside U.S. officials in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Sincerely,



ADAM KINZINGER
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



STEVE STIVERS
Member of Congress



SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress



MICHAEL WALTZ
Member of Congress



JASON CROW
Member of Congress