Re: Urgency Remains for Afghan Adjustment Act

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker McCarthy and Minority Leader Jeffries:

The bipartisan, newly reintroduced Afghan Adjustment Act (S.2327/H.R.4627) honors our nation’s commitment to its wartime allies by providing a path to permanent status for Afghan evacuees. It also ensures that these evacuees are properly and scrupulously vetted prior to considering them for such status.

For the reasons outlined below, the undersigned national security leaders urge you to work together to pass the legislation swiftly.

Following the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August 2021, the United States facilitated the evacuation of approximately 80,000 at-risk Afghans. All evacuees faced an uncertain and dangerous future under Taliban rule, and many were in imminent danger owing to their direct connection to U.S. military and diplomatic efforts over the past twenty years. Almost one-half of the evacuees were children.

The heavily backlogged Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) and refugee admissions programs, coupled with the more rapid than anticipated fall of Kabul, forced an expedited and chaotic evacuation of at-risk Afghans. As a result, most evacuees were brought to the United States under humanitarian parole, a swifter and more flexible process, but one that confers only temporary protections and work authorization without a clear path to permanent status.

The bipartisan Afghan Adjustment Act, led by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Representatives Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), addresses outstanding security and vetting concerns while providing a path for qualified and appropriately screened Afghans to pursue permanent status in the United States.
The rationale for the Afghan Adjustment Act is clear. First, it follows through on our nation’s commitment to its wartime allies by providing at-risk Afghans and their families — including many who supported the U.S. military and America’s diplomatic efforts for the past twenty years — a path to permanent status in the United States. Second, it sends a clear message to current and future allies — those who are necessary for U.S. servicemembers and diplomats to perform their missions in pursuit of national security — that the United States is a reliable and trusted partner that stands by the democratic ideals it professes.

With the initial two-year parole period for many evacuated Afghans set to expire, Congress has yet to create a permanent solution for this group, leaving tens of thousands of evacuees in legal limbo.

No action is not an option. We urge you to act to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act.

Thank you,

Barbara Comstock, Former Member of U.S. Congress
Dan Brown, Former U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Dave West, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Doug Baker, Former White House Homeland Security Council
Elaine Dezenski, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security
France Hoang, Former White House Assistant General Counsel
Gus Coldebella, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Hans Miller, Former U.S. Transportation Security Administration
Jim Williams, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Joe Whitley, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security
John Mitnick, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Julie Myers Wood, Former U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Lynden Melmed, Former U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Marc Frey, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Margaret Stock, Former U.S. Army
Michael Neifach, Former U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Michael Petrucelli, Former U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Ozzie Nelson, Former National Security Council and U.S. Navy
Parney Albright, Former Department of Homeland Security
Patrick Shen, Former U.S. Department of Justice and Senator Cornyn
Paul Rosenzweig, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Robert Mocny, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Ross Ashley, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security and National Guard
Scott Boylan, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Stewart Verdery, Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security

cc: Senate Appropriations Chair Patty Murray, Senate Appropriations Ranking Member
Susan Collins, House Appropriations Chair Rosa DeLauro, and House Appropriations Ranking Member Kay Granger