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REPUBLICAN WHIP TEAM

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July 14, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am deeply concerned about the fates of thousands of Afghan partners who assisted United States forces in Afghanistan, and I urge your administration to provide a concrete plan to ensure their safety as they continue to work through the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) process.

You recently stated in a July 8, 2021, press conference that “starting this month, we’re going to begin relocation flights for Afghanistan SIV applicants and their families who choose to leave.”¹ However, as the clock continues to tick, it is time for a tangible plan of action.

For two grueling decades, many Afghan interpreters and translators have worked tirelessly with American forces to further our mission in the Middle East, despite the inherent dangers. Today, as the final stages of a full troop evacuation from Afghanistan continues, these Afghan partners face greater risks than ever before.

There is bipartisan consensus that we must evacuate these interpreters, translators, and their families to locations that will minimize immediate threats to their safety. We are now awaiting answers from the Administration on three major questions in particular:

- Who among our Afghan partners will qualify for an evacuation?
- Where will they be evacuated to?
- Who will lead on-the-ground evacuation operations?

According to the National Immigration Forum, nearly 18,000 principle applicants remain in the SIV backlog, with another 5,000 waiting for initial action.² I have personally heard from families in my own district who have relatives in this backlog.

¹ National Immigrant Forum. “What the Military Withdrawal from Afghanistan Means for the SIV Backlog.” <https://immigrationforum.org/article/what-the-military-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-means-for-the-siv-backlog/> (Accessed: July 14, 2021)

² The White House. “Remarks by President Biden on the Drawdown of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan.” <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/07/08/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-drawdown-of-u-s-forces-in-afghanistan/> (Accessed: July 14, 2021)

Those who assisted our servicemembers over the past two decades deserve our enormous gratitude: these brave individuals undoubtedly saved American lives. Now let us help *them* to find better lives. I again respectfully ask you to provide details regarding the Afghan SIV process and thank you for your attention to this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Emmer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "T" and "E".

Tom Emmer
Member of Congress