

EVANGELICAL IMMIGRATION **table.**



July 14, 2023



Dear Members of Congress,



As we approach the second anniversary of the fall of Kabul, please support urgently needed legislation to permanently protect our allies who were evacuated to the United States. In August 2021, Afghanistan fell to the Taliban, triggering a frantic effort to evacuate U.S. citizens and allies to safety. In the weeks that followed, tens of thousands of Afghans were brought to the United States after being processed and vetted in third-country locations. The American people – including many evangelical Christians, responding in ways rooted in their biblical faith – have stepped up in remarkable, sacrificial ways to welcome these newcomers.



We are a diverse coalition of evangelical organizations and churches, collectively representing and serving millions of individuals, in the United States and around the world. Our work is guided by our Christian faith to care for those fleeing persecution, violence, and oppression. Scripture is clear about our role to embody compassion and justice towards those in need.



We are grateful for the reintroduction of the bipartisan Afghan Adjustment Act, and for the leadership of the bill's sponsors. The Afghan Adjustment Act acknowledges the plight of Afghan nationals who faced an urgent threat of persecution under the Taliban, including many who have worked tirelessly alongside the United States military, diplomatic missions, and non-governmental organizations, risking their lives to support the cause of peace and stability. These individuals have been our allies and partners in promoting shared values such as freedom, justice, and human dignity, and we are grateful that they have found refuge in the United States – but they still have only temporary legal protections in the U.S. that bear expiration dates.



The Afghan Adjustment Act presents a significant opportunity for Congress to provide a safe haven for Afghans paroled into the U.S., by allowing them to apply for permanent legal status, treating them in similar ways to how those formally admitted as refugee are treated under U.S. law. The bill also appropriately subjects Afghans to additional vetting and screening before they would be granted permanent legal status.



While we are grateful that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced a re-parole process for Afghan nationals, we believe that re-parole is insufficient because it leaves tens of thousands of Afghans facing an uncertain future. Additionally, alternative pathways to permanent legal status, such as applying for asylum, are inadequate as both the legal services infrastructure and governmental capacity to adjudicate asylum requests are already overwhelmed.

Churches, community organizations, and church-based volunteers have given generously of their time and resources to ensure that their Afghan neighbors felt welcomed into their communities. Many of our church-based partners are frustrated by our government's failure to provide a clear pathway to permanent legal status for the Afghans they've welcomed.

Lastly, in addition to the stress Afghans feel because of their lack of permanent legal status, many who have arrived are also deeply concerned for the wellbeing of family members and other loved ones who were not able to be evacuated, many of whom remain in Afghanistan and others of whom have escaped to other countries. We also urge you to do everything possible to ensure that the U.S. continues to welcome Afghans who are facing or have fled persecution from the Taliban, including urging the administration to consider further requests for humanitarian parole and to invest in a more robust and nimble refugee resettlement process.

We urge Congress to swiftly pass this important legislation and provide an opportunity for legal permanency for Afghans.

Sincerely,

Evangelical Immigration Table Organizations:

Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

Bethany Christian Services

Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

Faith and Community Empowerment

National Association of Evangelicals

National Latino Evangelical Coalition

The Wesleyan Church

World Relief