

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
1236 Longworth Office
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader of the House of
Representatives
2468 Rayburn Office
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
317 Russell Office
Washington, D.C. 20510

March 1, 2022

Dear Members of Congress,

As 253 faith-based leaders and 100 faith-based organizations across traditions, we write in support of an Afghan Adjustment Act for our new Afghan neighbors. We commend the U.S.' various efforts, including those led by civil society groups, to live up to America's [promise](#) to bring vulnerable Afghans to safety to the U.S. during the humanitarian evacuation from Afghanistan. Amidst a deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and cases of serious human rights breaches, we also urge you to advocate for speeding up the processing of Afghans' applications for relief from overseas and facilitating their journey to the U.S.

Following the end of America's longest war, over 80,000 Afghan evacuees were resettled to the U.S. in one of the largest resettlement efforts since the Vietnam War. Afghans evacuated to the U.S. include human rights advocates, educators, interpreters, and personnel that worked alongside U.S. forces and U.S.-based humanitarian organizations. As the urgent evacuations played out in real time, thousands of Afghans were granted humanitarian parole, which is typically granted for one or two years. Given the temporary nature of this relief, tens of thousands of the evacuated Afghan men, women, and children resettled in the U.S. will need to navigate complex legal issues to find more lasting protection in the U.S. We urgently call on Congress to pass an Afghan Adjustment Act and to ensure robust funding across refugee related accounts, which will keep families together and ensure this lasting protection for at-risk Afghans.

An Afghan Adjustment Act would address this unique situation by allowing certain Afghan evacuees to apply for permanent status after one year of being paroled in the country. Without an Afghan Adjustment Act, Afghan humanitarian parolees have very few options to remain in the U.S. after their parole status expires. If they worked for the U.S. military in Afghanistan, they could apply through the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program in which they will likely wait years to receive a decision or they can apply through the dysfunctional, backlogged U.S. asylum system. Neither avenue is a guarantee. In particular, the SIV program has been characterized by an unprecedented backlog in applications and cases of wrongful denials.

DHS [reports](#) that 36,000 Afghan humanitarian parolees in the U.S. currently lack a clear avenue to lawful permanent residency – many of whom are Afghan women's rights advocates, former reporters, and extended family members of Afghan U.S. military-affiliated interpreters. From DHS' own data and on-the-ground reporting in the U.S., we know that the parents, grandparents, siblings, nieces, and nephews of

adult SIV-eligible evacuees likely make up a significant portion of those without a direct path to legal permanent residency in the U.S. Given this, the threat of family separation in these cases looms large.

Guided by our faith values, we believe that immigration policies must prioritize family unity and honor the God-given dignity of each person. Each of us, through our congregations, synagogues, mosques, and places of worship, have historically played key roles in assisting refugees with housing, language, employment, and social support necessary for rapid and effective resettlement into U.S. communities.

The Qur'an directs us to “do good to... those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet” (4:36). In the Jewish and Christian traditions, we are also invited to welcome the neighbor, and do right by them: “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:33-34) and live up to our promises: “It is better not to promise anything than to promise something and not do it.” (Ecclesiastes 5:5-15). Across faith traditions and practices, the message is clear. Across our communities, we work hard to live out our beliefs. Now, we call upon Congress to stay true to our promises to at-risk Afghans, who have put their faith in us. Not only would an Afghan Adjustment Act realize these values, but it would also strengthen the ongoing resettlement and integration efforts we have supported.

Every day intensifies the threat of family separation and worry shared in our communities. We call for lasting protection for at-risk Afghans. The only viable solution is to return to historic precedent and adjust the humanitarian parole status of Afghans through the passage of an Afghan Adjustment Act, as the U.S. has done for other vulnerable people such as [Cubans following the rise of Fidel Castro](#), [Southeast Asians following the fall of Saigon](#), and [Iraqis following multiple U.S. military engagements](#). Adjusting the status of humanitarian parolees will allow for a pathway to lawful permanent residency and lasting safety for our neighbors. As faith leaders, we join [security experts](#), [refugee resettlement agencies](#), [Afghan Americans](#), [women's rights leaders](#), [veterans groups](#), and [legal experts](#) in seeking passage of this legislation.

We believe Congress has a moral responsibility to act swiftly. We eagerly look forward to working with you to ensure that an Afghan Adjustment Act has bipartisan support in Congress. Thank you for your engagement and service.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Amelia Dal Pra at adalpra@lirs.org and Giovana Oaxaca at Giovana.Oaxaca@elca.org.

Sincerely,

National Faith Organizations

ADL (Anti-Defamation League), National
Adorers of the Blood Of Christ, US Region, National
African American Ministers In Action, National
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), National
American Muslim Empowerment Network, National
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, National
Church World Service, National
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes, National
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, National
Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel, National
Disciples Public Presence, National
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries, National
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, National
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, National
Faith in Public Life, National
Franciscan Action Network, National
Friends Committee on National Legislation, National
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), National
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC, National
Islamic Relief USA, National
JAMAAT - Jews and Muslims and Allies Acting Together, National
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA, National
Jubilee Campaign USA, National
Just Neighbors Ministry, National
Leadership Conference of Women Religious, National
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, National
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, National
National Council of Churches, National
National Council of Jewish Women, National
National Justice for Our Neighbors, National
Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity, Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, National
Parity, National
Presbyterian Church (USA), National
Sadhana Coalition of Progressive Hindus, National
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province, National
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership, National
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership, National
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team, National
Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, National
Sojourners, National
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, National
The Episcopal Church, National
The Sikh Coalition, National
U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, National
UndocuBlack Network, National
Union for Reform Judaism, National
Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council, National

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, National
United Church of Christ Justice and Local Church Ministries, National
Women's Alliance For Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER), National
World Relief, National

State Faith Organizations

Arizona Faith Network, Arizona
First Church UCC Phoenix, Arizona
Pax Christi-Phoenix, Arizona
Riki Hawk Enterprises, LLC, Rancho Murieta, California
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Long Beach & West Orange County Section, California
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Faith & Justice Team, Colorado
Sisters of the Presentation, California
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, District of Columbia
National City Christian Church, District of Columbia
Broadway United Methodist Church, Illinois
Chicago Jewish Coalition for Refugees, Illinois
Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana
Lutheran Services in Iowa, Iowa
Plymouth UCC Peace & Justice Committee, Iowa
Presentation Lantern Center, Iowa
Lawrence Interfaith Refugee and Immigrant Ministry, Kansas
Franklin Federated Church, Massachusetts
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice, Michigan
Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, Michigan
IHM Sisters Leadership Council, Michigan
Peace United Church of Christ, Minnesota
Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Missouri
Daughters of Wisdom (US Province), New York
East End Temple, New York
FOCUS Churches of Albany, New York
Ministry & Nurture Committee and Peace & Earthcare Committee of Albany Friends Meeting, New York
New York Annual Conference Board of Church and Society, New York
New York Disaster Interfaith Services, New York
New York Justice for Our Neighbors, Inc., New York
Parkview Bruderhof, New York
Roosevelt-Freeport Church of Christ/North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE), New York
Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary Task Force on Immigration, New York
St. Joseph University Parish Refugee and Immigration Committee, New York
The Interfaith Center of New York, New York
Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration, New York
Race Matters, First Congregational UCC, Oregon
Pennsylvania Council of Churches, Pennsylvania
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Caminando Juntos - Presentation Sisters Hispanic Ministry, South Dakota
Dominican Sisters of Houston, Texas
Fellowship Southwest, Texas
Hope Border Institute, Texas

House of Love and Justice, Texas
Justice for Our Neighbors, Texas
LUCHA Ministries, Inc., Virginia
Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Parish, Virginia
Raj Khalsa Gurdwara, Virginia
The Firm Outreach, Washington
Westminster UCC, Washington

Faith Leaders

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Reverend North Carolina Valiquette, Arizona
RE Salena Petersen-Keesecker, Arizona
Lay Minister Sandra Kerr, Arizona
Fayetteville Friends Quaker Meeting, Co-Clerk Gladys Tiffany, Arkansas
Reverend Carla Dietz, California
Sister Diane Smith, California
Sister Jocelyn Quijano, California
Reverend Lyn Juckniess, California
Rev. Mary Kay Will, California
Ms. Maurine Huang, California
Sister Pat Davis, California
the Rev. Penny Newall, California
Dr. Norrzey Sadiq Noorzey, California
Rabbi Sheldon Lewis, California
Mr. Stan Fitzgerald, California
Carol Ramsey, California
Rev. Bobbi Wells Hargleroad, Colorado
Sister Carmela Trujillo O.S.F., Colorado
The Rev. Hal Chorpenning, Colorado
Rev. Jeff Wright, Colorado
Intern Pastor Jon Fry, Colorado
Rev. JT Smiedendorf, Colorado
Rev. Leta Arndt Behrens, Colorado
Ms. Linda Mahan, Colorado
Rev. Melissa R. St. Clair Melissa St. Clair, Colorado
Dr. Elizabeth Sauter Elizabeth Sauter, Connecticut
Janet Navon Janet Navon, Connecticut
LLM Jeanette Harris Jeanette Harris, Connecticut
Mrs. Laura Perednia, Connecticut
Sister Maureen Fleming, Pastoral Minister Maureen Fleming, Connecticut
Rector Ronald Kolanowski, Connecticut
Bruce Gaylord, Connecticut
Elder Lorie Tudor, Delaware
Rev. Dr. Amy Butler Amy Butler, District of Columbia
Me. Disne Speicher, District of Columbia
Sister Margaret Perron, District of Columbia
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Rev. Dr. Beverly Goines, Maryland
President, Church Council Mary Vincent, Maryland
Rev. Nathan Hill, Maryland
Rev. Patricia Hollinger, Maryland
Norman Miller, Massachusetts
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Christian Educator Jane Lindberg, Missouri
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The Reverend Angela Ying, National
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MFSA Bridget Cabrera, National
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Rev. Dr. Chuck Currie, National
SNDdeN Denise Curry, National
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Rev. Jennifer Adams, National
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Reverend Leslie Watson Wilson, National
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Sister Minnesota Kotturan, National
Dr. National Smith, National
Director National Gunn, National
Sister Rose Therese Nolta, National
Sister Ruth Battaglia, National
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Mr. Sam Harrell, National

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Sister Sister Honora Kinney, National
Rev. Dr. Stacey Wilson, National
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Chair, Rapid Response Immigration Team Sandra Sypherd, Nebraska
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Rev. Harriet Johnson, New Jersey
Sister Mary Agnes Sullivan, OP, New Jersey
Rev. North Carolina Moran, New Jersey
Mr. William Schulze, New Jersey
Rabbi Benjamin Sharff, New York
Rabbi Benjamin Resnick Benjamin Resnick, New York
Rev Brigid Beckman, New York
Sister Cecelia Lavan, New York
Rabbi Dana Bogatz, New York
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Rabbi Joshua Stanton, New York
Sister Kathleen Kanet, New York
Kathleen Kelley, New York
Rev. Kathy Donley, New York
Rabbi Levi Welton, New York
Ms. Luz Gonzalez, New York
Sister M Doretta Cornell, RDC, New York
Rabbi Mara Young, New York
Elder Maria Studer, New York
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Rev. Nicole Crouch, Virginia

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