



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Retired U.S. Ambassadors who led in Afghanistan Since 2001 Urge Congress to Pass Afghan Adjustment Act

*Former Chiefs of Mission Pushing Congress to Include
Legislation in Omnibus Spending Bill*

Washington DC – Nearly every U.S. ambassador assigned to Afghanistan since 2001 has [signed on to a letter](#) urging Congress to include the Afghan Adjustment Act in the omnibus spending bill.

“This legislation is essential to do right by those who fought with us and to save a small shred of our national honor,” said Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann (ret.)

This group of retired Ambassadors, all of whom served as Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan, has written a letter to congressional leaders pushing them to pass the bill before the end of the year. The letter is being sent this evening.

This legislation **“keeps our deep and binding commitments we made to our wartime allies. This is a moral imperative but also ensures we will find future allies in conflicts to come,”** write the ambassadors in the letter.

“If the United States does not act to support its allies by passing the Afghan Adjustment Act, in the future our allies will be less likely to support the U.S. missions if they see that our Afghan partners are abandoned. In diplomacy, our words will have lost meaning, and in the unfortunate event of future conflict, what incentive would local allies have to support our troops? This legislation will go far to honor the promises we have made to the people of Afghanistan over the last 20 year,” the letter reads.

The letter is signed by retired ambassadors Ryan Crocker, Ronald E. Neumann, William Wood, Earl Anthony Wayne, James Cunningham, P. Michael McKinley, Hugo Llorens, and Ross Wilson. It was organized by #AfghanEvac's founder and CEO, Shawn VanDiver and retired Ambassador Philip Kosnett.

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The bill will enable newly arrived Afghans to go through the immigration process, undergo a robust vetting with all necessary security reviews, and have a path forward to lawful permanent residency here in the United States.

The letter reads as follows:

“Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell,

We are a group of retired Ambassadors, all of whom served as Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan, who have dedicated our professional lives to furthering America’s interests in the world.

We are writing today because we are convinced that the Afghan Adjustment Act furthers those interests. The need is urgent and time is short. We encourage you to act now and include the Afghan Adjustment Act (S.4787, H.R.8685) and related provisions in the upcoming FY2023 Omnibus.

The Afghan Adjustment Act:

- Prioritizes national security with the strictest security vetting in our immigration system for Afghans.
- Increases oversight and transparency with an Interagency Task Force and associated required reports.
- Removes red tape, helps our national security, and streamlines processes to alleviate problems and burdens in our processing systems.
- Provides a vetted path for close Afghan allies, such as Afghan Commandos, who were wrongly omitted from the current SIV program despite their close alliance and sacrifice for our cause.
- Prevents the asylum system from being overwhelmed with thousands of new requests as parole begins to expire for those Afghans who were brought here during the August 2021 evacuation.

Most of all, it keeps our deep and binding commitments we made to our wartime allies. This is a moral imperative but also ensures we will find future allies in conflicts to come.

If Congress fails to act, it will strain already-overwhelmed asylum and immigration court systems. Without an AAA, tens of thousands of recently arrived Afghans will have to find an existing immigration pathway to remain lawful once their parole expires. That will mean tens of thousands of new asylum claims, when the current affirmative asylum backlog is more than 400,000 cases with a broader immigration backlog of 1.4 million cases.



Finally, without the Afghan Adjustment Act, the task of American diplomacy will be much more difficult. If the United States does not act to support its allies by passing the Afghan Adjustment Act, in the future our allies will be less likely to support the U.S. missions if they see that our Afghan partners are abandoned. In diplomacy, our words will have lost meaning, and in the unfortunate event of future conflict, what incentive would local allies have to support our troops? This legislation will go far to honor the promises we have made to the people of Afghanistan over the last 20 years.

We urge you to act to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act without delay.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Ryan Crocker
Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann
Ambassador William Wood
Ambassador Earl Anthony Wayne
Ambassador James Cunningham
Ambassador P. Michael McKinley
Ambassador Hugo Llorens
Ambassador Ross Wilson”

The Afghan Adjustment Act, known in the House as H.R. 8685 and in the Senate as S. 4787, would mirror efforts made by the U.S. government for Vietnamese and South Asian refugees following the fall of Saigon.

As a result of the U.S.'s hurried evacuation from Afghanistan, the vast majority of Afghan evacuees were admitted to the country on a temporary basis under “humanitarian parole,” which does not confer a direct pathway to lawful permanent residence.

In order to provide such a pathway, as the U.S. has previously done for every generation of modern wartime evacuees, the Afghan Adjustment Act would allow eligible Afghan evacuees to apply for lawful permanent residence in the U.S. after one or two years of physical presence in the country.

The more than 200 organizations that make up the non-partisan #AfghanEvac coalition work hand-in-hand with government entities and advocate for ways to provide new Afghan community members with the stability they need to resettle and thrive in their new lives here.

For twenty years, Afghan allies worked and fought side-by-side with U.S. and allied forces through the longest war in American history. The #AfghanEvac coalition is committed to ensuring that their service, partnership, and commitment to American ideals is honored.

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