Dear President Biden and Members of Congress,

As an elected official, we are writing to you today with deep concern for Afghans who are forced from their homes or at risk of life-threatening reprisals from the Taliban. The scenes from the Kabul airport are devastating and only scratch the surface of the situation Afghans now find themselves in. In recent days, we have heard harrowing reports of Taliban members going door-to-door to identify women, peacebuilders, journalists, lawyers and judges, former members of government, and human rights defenders. These individuals, as well as their colleagues and loved ones, face grave danger and require our immediate assistance.

Throughout the 20-year war in Afghanistan, the U.S. made sweeping promises and helped secure important gains in the realms of human rights and democracy in partnership with our brave Afghan allies. Our Afghan partners have been integral to the U.S. mission, and we have a moral responsibility to protect those at risk due to our withdrawal. The U.S. should work with bilateral and multilateral partners to ensure urgent evacuation remains possible up to and beyond the planned August 31 withdrawal deadline.

Time is of the essence. Markets are closed and people are sheltering in place as they await information about ways out of the country. Cell phone minutes, which are usually purchased on an ad-hoc basis, will soon run out for most Afghans, as will food rations and access to cash.

We implore President Biden to urgently prioritize the following:

- Facilitate the evacuation of Afghans and Americans together by enabling and facilitating travel to the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul and other border crossings, providing direct evacuation flights, continuing consular processing at the airport, and providing necessary information to evacuees.
- Evacuate Afghan allies and at-risk populations to U.S. territory, including by expediting Special Immigrant Visas and refugee applications through the U.S. resettlement program. Particularly for women and their families who are targets, the path to protection, even under Priority 2 designation, is often inaccessible. Women leaders, former members of government, human rights defenders, activists, LGBTQ* individuals, religious minorities, students, and recent graduates must also be prioritized in evacuation efforts.
- Surge adjudication and processing resources to ensure bureaucracy does not get in the way of evacuation efforts.
Facilitate the humanitarian parole of Afghans into the U.S. using DHS parole authority, either at ports-of-entry or in advance, set the FY 2022 refugee admissions goal at 125,000, and designate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Afghans already in the U.S.

Call for an emergency session of the UN Security Council and propose a strong civilian and atrocity protection/observer mandate. The Administration must work with international and bilateral partners to establish a security and humanitarian corridor to facilitate evacuation and delivery of humanitarian aid.

We urge all Members of Congress to:

Issue congressional authority to the State Department (PRM) and Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to provide reception and placement assistance for Afghans paroled into the U.S.

Allocate funding and resources for resettlement for those able to evacuate. The current levels are insufficient to meet the requirements of U.S. and regional refugee resettlement.

Support and provide resources to women, youth, and other civil society and human rights members who choose to remain in Afghanistan.

We stand ready to welcome Afghan refugees into our states and communities.

Sincerely,

Alaska
State Representative Harriet Drummond
State Representative Sara Hannan

Arkansas
State Representative Jamie Scott
State Representative Denise Ennett

Arizona
State Representative Rebecca Rios

Colorado
State Representative Lisa Cutter
State Representative Brianna Titone

Connecticut
State Senator Marilyn Moore

Florida
State Representative Anna Eskamani

Georgia
State Representative Becky Evans

Hawaii
State Representative Amy Perruso

Idaho
State Senator Melissa Wintrow
State Representative Muffy Davis
State Representative Lauren Necochea

Illinois
State Representative Anna Moeller
State Representative Laura Fine
Kansas
State Senator Pat Pettey

Kentucky
State Representative Joni Jenkins
State Representative Attica Scott

Massachusetts
State Senator Jo Comerford
State Representative Natalie Higgins
State Representative Tram Nguyen

Maryland
State Delegate Michele Guyton
State Delegate Sheila Ruth
State Delegate Edith Patterson

Maine
State Senator Marianne Moore
State Senator Eloise Vitelli
State Representative Kristen Cloutier
State Representative Victoria Doudera
State Representative Denise Tepler
State Representative Rebecca Millett

Michigan
State Senator Winnie Brinks
State Senator Stephanie Chang
State Representative Julie Brixie
State Representative Cynthia Johnson
State Representative Laurie Pohutsky
State Representative Samantha Steckloff
State Representative Lori Stone

Minnesota
State Representative Connie Bernardy
State Representative Kaohly Her
State Representative Kelly Moller

Missouri
State Representative Trish Gunby
State Representative Sarah Unsicker

Montana
State Senator Edith McClafferty
State Representative Mary Ann Dunwell

North Carolina
State Representative Kristin Baker
State Representative Mary Belk

North Dakota
State Representative Alisa Mitskog

Nebraska
State Senator Megan Hunt

New Hampshire
State Representative Betty Gay
State Representative Diane Langley
State Representative Lee Oxenham
State Representative Marjorie A Porter
State Representative Laura Telerski
State Representative Safiya Wazir

New Mexico
State Representative Liz Thomson

Oregon
State Representative Dacia Grayber
State Representative Khanh Pham
State Representative Janeen Sollman

Rhode Island
State Senator Kendra Anderson
State Representative Barbara Ann Fenton-Fung
State Representative Teresa Tanzi

South Dakota
State Representative Jennifer Keintz

Utah
State Representative Marsha Judkins
State Representative Christine Watkins
Virginia
State Delegate Kathy Tran

Vermont
State Representative Sara Coffey
State Representative Laura Sibilia
State Representative Heather Surprenant

Wisconsin
State Senator Kelda Roys
State Representative Francesca Hong
State Representative Lisa Subeck

West Virginia
State Delegate Barbara Fleischauer
State Delegate Kayla Young