

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 30, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro N. Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW  
Washington D.C. 20016

The Honorable Ur M. Jaddou  
Director  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
5900 Capital Gateway Drive  
Camp Springs, Maryland 20588

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Director Jaddou:

We write to express our concern over the application filing fee for vulnerable Afghans seeking admission to the United States through humanitarian parole. In order to expedite the processing of these requests and enable the admission of more at-risk Afghans without any other path to entry into the United States, we request that you waive all application fees for Afghan nationals seeking parole into the United States. In addition, for those Afghans who have already applied for parole, we urge United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to first process parole requests before reviewing any applicant's request for a waiver.

Humanitarian parole provides temporary admission for those who have otherwise exhausted every other means to enter the United States during a compelling emergency. As you know, those applying for parole, including many United States citizens supporting those applications, must pay a \$575 filing fee for each application for admission into the United States. This fee can be prohibitive for many attempting to flee a warzone. In an effort to assist those unable to pay this fee, USCIS developed a waiver process for applicants to have their requests considered without having to pay any fee.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately, it's our understanding that an applicant's parole request *cannot even be considered* until USCIS adjudicates that applicant's fee waiver request. This requirement can slow the parole process considerably, which is unacceptable in dangerous time-sensitive situations. Put simply, vulnerable Afghans shouldn't have to demonstrate their financial need during a crisis in order to have their parole request considered. Without adjustments, this process will create an unnecessary backlog for humanitarian parole requests.

In recent weeks, our offices have been inundated with tens of thousands of requests from at-risk Afghans attempting to enter the United States. For 20 years, the United States has relied on Afghans' invaluable support and assistance to carry out our mission. It is heart-wrenching that their lives may be at risk without additional assistance from the United States.

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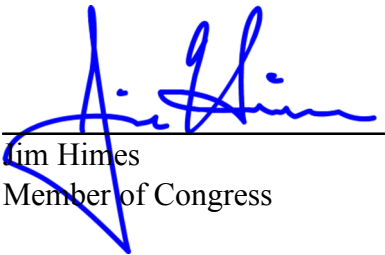
<sup>1</sup>[https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/memos/FeeWaiverGuidelines\\_Established\\_by\\_the\\_Final%20Rule\\_USCISFeeSchedule.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/memos/FeeWaiverGuidelines_Established_by_the_Final%20Rule_USCISFeeSchedule.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uscis.gov/i-912>

We appreciate USCIS' efforts to expeditiously review thousands of parole applications and assist individuals granted parole into the United States. While we recognize the immense strain that USCIS personnel are under, we must streamline this process in order to facilitate the admission of more vulnerable Afghans. We can help countless more Afghans if USCIS both provides a blanket waiver of fees for future humanitarian parole applicants and ensures that those who have already applied are considered without delay.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



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Tim Himes  
Member of Congress



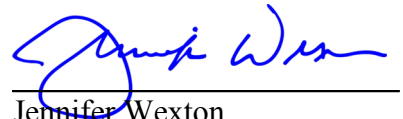
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Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress



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Katie Porter  
Member of Congress



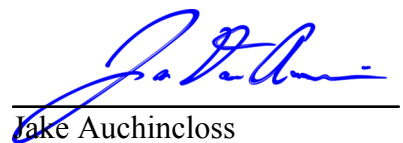
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Mondair Jones  
Member of Congress



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Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



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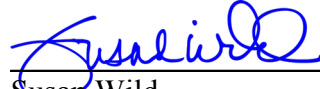
Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress

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Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



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Susan Wild  
Member of Congress



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Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



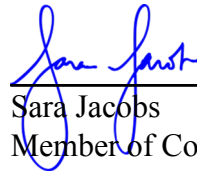
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Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



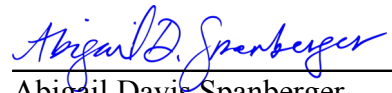
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Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



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Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



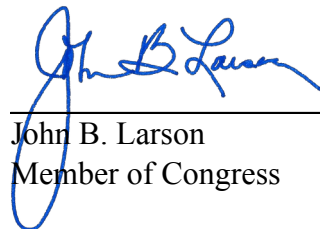
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Abigail Davis Spanberger  
Member of Congress



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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



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John B. Larson  
Member of Congress



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Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



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David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress



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Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



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Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress



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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Alan S. Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



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Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



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Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



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Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

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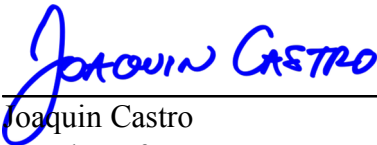
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Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress



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Tom Malinowski  
Member of Congress



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Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



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Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress



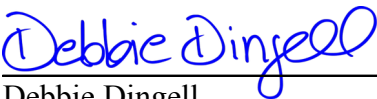
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J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress



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André Carson  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

October 21, 2021

The Honorable Jim Himes  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Himes:

Thank you for your August 30, 2021 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Secretary Mayorkas asked that I respond on his behalf.

On August 29, 2021, President Biden directed DHS to lead implementation of ongoing efforts across the federal government to support vulnerable Afghans, including those who worked alongside us in Afghanistan for the past two decades, as they safely resettle in the United States. These coordinated efforts are known as Operation Allies Welcome (OAW). DHS launched a website to provide detailed information regarding OAW and will continue to update the website as additional information becomes available.<sup>1</sup>

Secretary Mayorkas has exercised his authority to parole certain Afghan nationals into the United States, on a case-by-case basis, for a period of two years and subsequent to appropriate screening and vetting, provided their movement to the United States is being carried out pursuant to OAW. As part of this process, DHS has acted to exempt certain fees for Afghans who have been relocated to the United States and are applying for specific benefits. Once paroled by DHS, Afghan nationals are eligible for employment authorization and may be eligible to apply for immigration status. USCIS has deployed a significant number of volunteers to various locations across the United States to assist with processing Afghan evacuees. USCIS personnel are adjudicating applications for employment authorization, conducting other immigration processing, including the provision of “special immigrant” status to those who qualify, and providing administrative support, including interpretation services, to expedite the processing of applications for immigration status and work authorization. The Departments of State and Health and Human Services are working to facilitate relocation of Afghans granted parole and ensure that those Afghans arriving in American communities have initial support, including short-term emergency health insurance. We greatly appreciate Congress including resettlement assistance and other benefits for Afghan parolees in the Continuing Resolution.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.dhs.gov/allieswelcome>

Thank you for your recommendation to waive the application fee for Afghan nationals seeking parole from outside the United States. We appreciate your suggestion that USCIS consider processing Afghan parole requests prior to adjudicating their fee waiver requests.

We have seen an outpouring of support from the American public for our Afghan allies as well as from the USCIS workforce. DHS will continue to lead the coordination of this historic effort and USCIS will continue to use all available resources to support this whole-of-government and whole-of-society mission. I am confident that together we will meet the goal of successfully welcoming and integrating our Afghan allies to communities across our country, while protecting our national security.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The cosigners of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ur M. Jaddou  
Director