

April 25, 2017

Dear Senators and Representatives:

We are military veteran organizations, and we write to urge your support for the Keeping Our Promise to Our Afghan Allies Act (S.630 and H.R. 1544). The bill provides an emergency allocation of 2,500 visas for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program.

Thousands of Afghans provided crucial support to U.S. armed forces, diplomats, and other U.S. government agencies operating in Afghanistan as linguists, contractors, security guards, and in other capacities. As a result of their service, U.S. allies have come under well-documented threats from the Taliban and other groups hostile to the United States.

Currently, the SIV program has suspended interviews for SIV applicants because of a visa shortage; with more than 10,000 applicants in the program, more than 8,500 allies face indefinite limbo until Congress allocates additional visas to the Afghan SIV program. The Keeping Our Promise to Our Afghan Allies Act would provide a desperately-needed allocation of visas as an emergency stopgap until further action can be taken. We still remember those brave Vietnamese allies who served with us and with whom we did not keep faith. We must not do that with our Afghan allies.

Our Afghan allies have made incredible sacrifices while serving alongside U.S. troops, diplomats, and other officials. Many service members are alive and were able to come home because of these brave wartime partners. We call on the U.S. Congress to demonstrate that it will not abandon these wartime heroes by supporting the Keeping Our Promise to Our Afghan Allies Act.

Sincerely,

No One Left Behind  
Association of the U.S. Army  
Vietnam Veterans of America  
Veterans for American Ideals  
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America  
High Ground Veterans Advocacy