

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

10/1/2021

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

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

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Director Jaddou:

Given the extreme financial hardship and immediate danger facing Afghans fleeing to the United States, we urge you to implement a blanket waiver on fees for Afghans and their families when they apply for humanitarian parole into the United States, and we ask that you issue guidance for applicants and attorneys who are applying for this status.

It is important to note that individuals processed as refugees are not subject to any fees, and we believe the same standard should apply to parolees from Afghanistan. However, the current fee facing Afghans who apply for humanitarian parole is \$575 per applicant. Under federal regulations, the Director of USCIS holds the authority to waive fees under 8 CFR 103.7(d) which states:

“the Director of USCIS may approve and suspend exemptions from any fee required by paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section or provide that the fee may be waived for a case or specific class of cases that is not otherwise provided in this section, if the Director determines that such action would be in the public interest and the action is consistent with other applicable law.”

While we understand that an application for a waiver can be filed on an individual basis through an I-912 form, many applicants are justifiably concerned the additional filing and adjudication time will slow down the processing time and require paperwork they do not have in order to show financial hardship. In addition, if parole is authorized, a second fee for the DS-160 form of \$160 must also be paid to the Department of State for a nonimmigrant visa. This means each individual attempting to be considered for humanitarian parole must pay \$735 in fees to reach safety.

The burden of application fees is weighing heavily on communities here in the United States. Families and friends of Afghans who are trying to apply for humanitarian parole are shouldering payments and are being forced to make difficult financial decisions. Some have even appealed to local governments to help them cover the costs of these fees.

For these reasons, we urge you to implement a blanket waiver on fees for humanitarian parolees from Afghanistan and to expedite their applications. We also urge you to issue clear

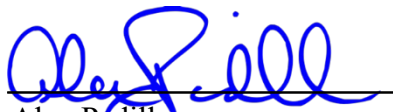
guidance so that applicants and attorneys can understand what options are available to them and if they qualify for humanitarian parole and a waiver.


In addition, we ask that you provide answers to the following questions no later than October 11, 2021:

1. How many Afghan nationals have applied for humanitarian parole since August 1, 2021?
2. How many humanitarian parole applications have been approved since August 1, 2021?
3. How many requests for fee waivers were made by Afghan nationals applying for humanitarian parole since August 1, 2021?
4. Please provide the status of those fee waiver requests including whether they have been granted, denied, or are pending review.
5. Does USCIS plan to issue guidance on the fees associated with humanitarian parole?
6. Has USCIS considered implementing a blanket fee waiver for Afghan humanitarian parole requests? If so, what, if any barriers, are preventing USCIS from engaging in immediate implementation?

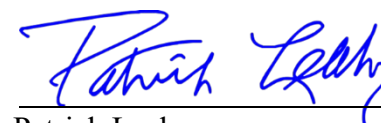
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

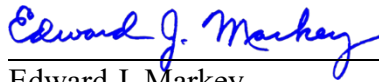
Sincerely,


Alex Padilla
United States Senator

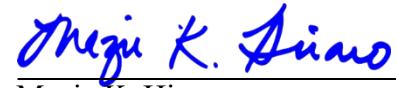

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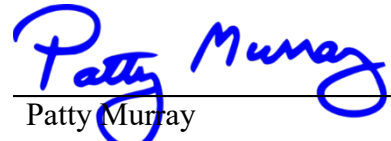
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Tina Smith
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United States Senator



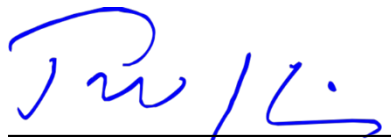
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



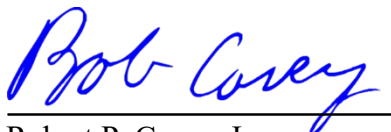
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



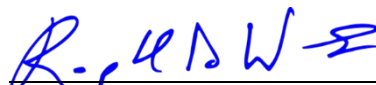
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Benjamin L. Cardin
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Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



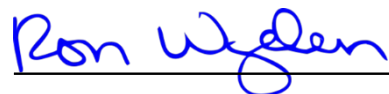
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



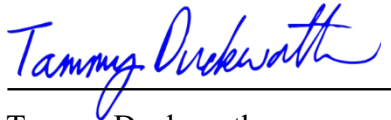
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United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
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Tammy Duckworth
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Michael F. Bennet
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Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

CC: Antony Blinken, Secretary, U.S. State Department