

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 2, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write regarding the humanitarian crisis created by your withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan, and the safety and well-being of our fellow countrymen and allies who you left behind. The signatories of this letter may have differing opinions about whether the United States should have maintained a military presence in Afghanistan, but we all agree that the arbitrary and poorly-planned method by which you withdrew from Afghanistan caused this crisis.

You say that more than 123,000 individuals have been evacuated from Afghanistan in recent weeks (nearly half of whom were evacuated by groups or countries other than the United States), but only an estimated 5,500 “self-identified” American citizens (4.5% of the total evacuees) were evacuated or able to leave on their own. Further, while it does not appear that you have released exact numbers of our Afghan partners who were evacuated, your administration has publicly confirmed that fewer than 50% of evacuated Afghans were Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants or their families.

Our immediate priority is the safety and well-being of American citizens, permanent residents, and allies who were left behind in Afghanistan. We are also concerned by reports that ineligible individuals, including Afghans with ties to terrorist organizations or serious, violent criminals, were evacuated alongside innocent refugee families. We request that you provide answers to the following questions no later than 5:00PM on Tuesday, September 7:

1. How many American citizens does the administration believe to remain in Afghanistan?
 - a. Of the American citizens still in Afghanistan, how many are currently in contact with the State Department?
 - b. Of the American citizens still in Afghanistan, how many have expressed a desire to be repatriated to the United States?
 - c. How did the administration reach this estimate, and what steps is the administration taking to find and connect with Americans who may still be in Afghanistan but who are not in contact with the State Department?

2. How many green-card holders does the administration believe to remain in Afghanistan?
 - a. Of the green-card holders still in Afghanistan, how many are currently in contact with the State Department?
 - b. Of the green card holders still in Afghanistan, how many have expressed a desire to be repatriated to the United States?
 - c. How did the administration reach this estimate, and what efforts is the administration taking to find and connect with green-card holders who may still be in Afghanistan but who are not in contact with the State Department?

3. How many Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants remain in Afghanistan?
 - a. Of the SIVs remaining in Afghanistan, how many have already received final SIV approval from the U.S. Center for Immigration Services?
 - b. Of the SIVs remaining in Afghanistan, how many are currently in contact with the State Department?
 - c. Of the approved SIVs and the SIV applicants who were evacuated, how many served for a year or more as interpreters or translators for American or allied armed forces in Afghanistan?
 - d. Are the State Department and USCIS still processing pending SIV applications? What steps are being taken to ensure that pending applicants are safe from Taliban reprisals as their applications are adjudicated?

4. According to your administration, more than 50% of evacuated Afghans were not SIV applicants or their families, including vulnerable Afghans such as women and girls at high risk for Taliban reprisals. Of the more than 57,000 Afghans who are not American citizens, green-card holders, or SIV applicants or their families, how many had no pending immigration application or status with the United States prior to being airlifted?
 - a. By what criteria did your administration select these individuals for the airlift while leaving American citizens, green-card holders, and SIV applicants and their families behind?
 - b. How many evacuees, in total, are Afghans who are not American citizens, green-card holders, or SIV applicants or their families? Please also provide a breakdown of how many of these individuals are adult men, adult women, girls, or boys.
 - c. What steps did your administration take to verify the identities of these individuals before evacuation?
 - d. What steps are your administration taking to ensure that individuals are thoroughly vetted and their identities verified before entering the United States?
 - e. Who is responsible for vetting these evacuated individuals before they reach the United States?

- f. Is the administration checking for potential criminal records and national-security concerns before admitting individuals to the United States?
- g. There are reports that a convicted rapist—who had previously served a prison sentence in the United States before being deported—was flown to the national capital region as part of this airlift operation.¹ Was that individual vetted before being flown to the United States? If so, was his criminal record found and ignored, or was it not found in the first place?
- h. How many other individuals have been allowed to enter the United States as part of this evacuation before undergoing vetting and background checks?

We request thorough, unclassified answers to these questions that can be made available to the general public. Americans need to see that the United States will not abandon them to terrorists abroad forever. If your answers implicate classified material, you may also submit a classified appendix to your answers and coordinate with us to provide a classified briefing.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

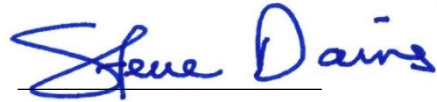


Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

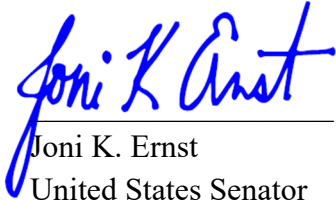
¹ <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/aug/30/convicted-rapist-reached-us-afghan-evacuation-flig/>



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



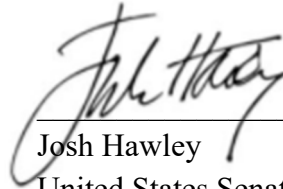
Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator



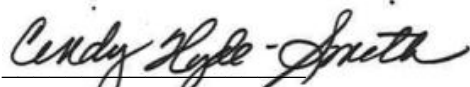
Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



Josh Hawley
United States Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



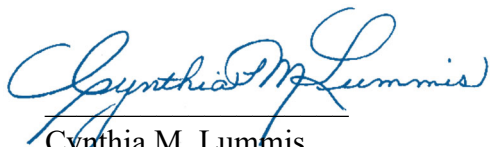
Ron Johnson
United States Senator



John Kennedy
United States Senator



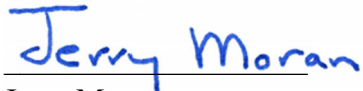
Michael S. Lee
United States Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator



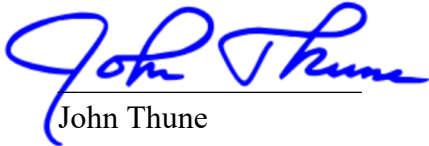
Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



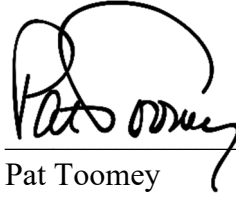
Jerry Moran
United States Senator



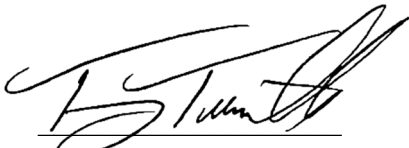
Ben Sasse
United States Senator



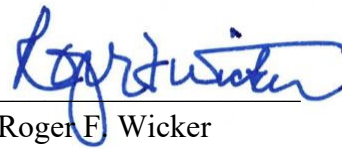
John Thune
United States Senator



Pat Toomey
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator