

Call to Action: Congress should pass an Afghan Adjustment Act

August 2021...as the Taliban swept across Afghanistan and into Kabul, chaos reigned in the city and more than 120,000 individuals were airlifted out of Kabul Airport. Many of these individuals were U.S. citizens, or the citizens of U.S. allies. However, more than 70,000 were Afghan nationals... men and women who had assisted the U.S. and our allies in the war effort plus their families. Although some were already in process to be approved for emigration to the U.S. through the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program, most have been admitted to the U.S. in the category of humanitarian parole, a designation that affords temporary lawful presence in the United States for “urgent humanitarian reasons.” Those admitted with humanitarian parole status have only 2 years to be approved for permanent residency.

An **Afghan Adjustment Act** would provide Afghans who have been arriving under temporary humanitarian parole status with a pathway to permanent status. This act would create the opportunity for them to apply to become lawful permanent residents after one year in the U.S. If that does not occur, they would be forced to apply as asylum-seekers, which is a costly and uncertain process. As the United States welcomes the Afghans who assisted us, communities need support to ensure that our new neighbors have what they need to integrate and thrive in their new communities. An **Afghan Adjustment Act** would remove uncertainty; it would protect against the possibility that they might suddenly be deported and returned to certain danger.

Congress has passed similar legislation in the past. Three noteworthy examples occurred following Fidel Castro’s rise to power in Cuba, after America’s withdrawal from Vietnam, and following the U.S. military actions in Iraq. After these conflicts, Congress passed Adjustment Acts that granted Cubans, people from Southeast Asia and from Iraq, who had entered the U.S. as parolees, the opportunity to adjust their status and become eligible for permanent residency. With respect to security, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) runs additional checks, completes biometrics yet again, and conducts interviews before approving an applicant to make sure individuals are not a national security threat to the United States.

As we work to settle Afghan families in our communities, we need the support of Congress to assure that these efforts are not merely transient. One of our partners, HIAS, has issued a Call to Action for February 8, 2022. An **Afghan Adjustment Act** should be included in the budget reconciliation debate that is scheduled to begin on that date.

For additional information:

NEIGHBORS FOR REFUGEES ZOOM EVENT TO SUPPORT AN AFGHAN ADJUSTMENT ACT

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2022, 4:00 PM...

[**Sign up for the Event here**](#)

(It will take only a minute to add your name and email, and you will automatically receive the Zoom link)

On February 8, call Senator Schumer (202-224-6542), Senator Gillibrand (202-224-4451) and Representative Jamaal Bowman (914-371-9220). Urge them to support and pass an Afghan Adjustment Act.

Michael J. Reichgott, MD, PhD

President elect, Neighbors for Refugees