



**OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**

Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602

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**CONTACT: Andrew Gillespie**  
(802) 636-7047

**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

**Lt. Governor Molly Gray Calls on Congress to Pass an “Afghan Adjustment Act”**

**Montpelier, Vt.** — Today, Vermont Lieutenant Governor Molly Gray, in a letter to the Vermont Congressional Delegation, called on Congress to assist Afghan evacuees arriving in Vermont by passing an “Afghan Adjustment Act.”

As Afghan evacuees arrive in the United States and are welcomed to Vermont, many face significant hurdles in their path to U.S. citizenship. Some have received Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) granting them permanent resident status after one year. More commonly, because of the rapid emergency evacuation out of Afghanistan, Afghans are being admitted as “humanitarian parolees”.

The legal process for “humanitarian parolees” is complicated and requires parolees to first apply for and be granted asylum. This process can take years to complete and requires significant, costly legal representation.

“Vermont lacks qualified legal representation to handle additional asylum cases. As a result, Afghan refugees are subject to greater vulnerabilities while contending with an uncertain future,” Lt. Governor Gray said, “An Afghan Adjustment Act would fulfill our humanitarian obligation to vulnerable Afghans contending with uncertain futures. Moreover, passing an Afghan Adjustment Act is the least our country can do to honor the sacrifices of our Afghan Allies and the risks associated with their service.”

An Afghan Adjustment Act would allow certain Afghan evacuees to apply for permanent resident status after one year of being paroled. It would relieve the immediate burden on the SIV process — which currently has over 18,000 backlogged cases. Moreover, the asylum process currently has over 1 million backlogged cases.

Similar legislation has been used several times in the past to assist groups who have arrived in the United States because of an emergency situation in their home country. For example, in 1966 Congress passed a bill to allow Cuban parolees who fled the communist regime to apply for permanent status after one year of residence in the country. Similarly, Congress acted in 1977 to allow for more than 150,000 refugees from Southeast Asia to apply for permanent residence.

“In recent weeks, my office has received an outpouring of contact from Vermonters wishing to support Afghans arriving in Vermont. Our communities stand ready to welcome Afghan evacuees. Let’s ensure they have the immigration status and access to support necessary to successfully rebuild their lives in the Green Mountain State,” Lt. Governor Gray said.

Lt. Governor Gray’s full letter to the Vermont Congressional Delegation can be read [here](#).

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