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**Washington, DC 20515-6015**

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July 11, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem,

We write regarding the termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Afghanistan and urge you to consider a 90-day extension as Congress works to find a bipartisan legislative solution to protect Afghan refugees and their families.

As you know, for twenty years, the United States maintained a significant military and diplomatic presence in Afghanistan in support of the Afghan National Government. As part of that effort, we asked the people of Afghanistan to trust the United States and work with us to build a new future for their nation.

Those who answered that call were interpreters, diplomats, government contractors, and soldiers who fought alongside U.S. troops. They helped our missions succeed and they saved American lives, all at great risk to their own lives, and the lives of their families. When the United States withdrew from Afghanistan in August 2021, we evacuated 124,000 Afghans. We did so because we knew what would happen if the Taliban returned to power. Those Afghans, and their families, who had assisted U.S. operations would be subject to the vengeful retribution of the Taliban.

As of January 22, 2025, there were 11,685 Afghans legally present in the United States under TPS. Many of these Afghans are waiting for their or a family member's Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) application to process. This application involves multiple rigorous background checks and requires verification of their work in assisting the United States. It can take up to seven years for an applicant to receive their visa.

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For these Afghans in the United States who have applied for an SIV, TPS has allowed them to live relatively normal lives. They are able to work and support their families in the United States as they move toward gaining a pathway to durable status in the United States.

However, these applicants need additional time for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to adjudicate their applications. These are people who directly helped the United States in its mission to build an Afghanistan free of the abuses of the Taliban. They have earned the privilege of remaining in the United States while their applications are processed. And the bottom line is this: If these people are forced to go back to Afghanistan, many of them will be tortured or killed.

There is bipartisan support to protect SIV holders and applicants in Congress. This was demonstrated through the bipartisan passage of the Additional Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2022. Efforts are currently underway to find a legislative compromise in the Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations process to ensure there are permanent protections for the Afghans who supported us. An extension of TPS is necessary to ensure that this legislative fix can be enacted.

America must stand with the allies who supported us in our 20-year war in Afghanistan. It is what they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense



Lauren Underwood  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security