

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

August 31, 2021

**Assistance to Returning American Personnel and New Arrivals from Afghanistan**

In April 2021, President Joseph R. Biden announced plans to withdraw all American troops from Afghanistan in the coming months. In recent weeks, the administration has set August 31, 2021 as the deadline for the full withdrawal of American personnel, prompting mass evacuations of Americans, Afghan nationals and their families, and others who assisted the United States in the war effort and rightfully fear retaliation from the Taliban. Since the end of July 2021, more than 88,000 people have been evacuated with increasing urgency as the Taliban wrestled control over the country from the Afghan government.

The Afghan people have witnessed the collapse of their government and many are fearful about the what the future may hold. Particularly, Afghans who assisted the United States in the war effort, or who may be persecuted under Taliban rule because of their gender identity, sexual orientation, occupation and political beliefs, are attempting to find refuge in America and elsewhere due to the dangerous conditions in their native home.

**MOTION**

MITCHELL \_\_\_\_\_

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HAHN \_\_\_\_\_

BARGER \_\_\_\_\_

SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

Thousands of Afghan nationals and U.S. allies have been evacuated and some will eventually resettle in Los Angeles County. Refugee resettlement agencies in the County are coordinating critical resources such as temporary housing for new arrivals who were able to attain a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV). Those with approved SIVs are eligible for many public social services that the County provides. With a true commitment to community, the County must continue to serve as a home to immigrants from across the globe – from unaccompanied children to refugees, we should aid in humanitarian efforts that support the well-being of vulnerable women, children and families everywhere. Already, groups of Afghan SIV applicants have arrived in the County and are being assisted by local refugee resettlement agencies. The County provides public social services that SIV holders are eligible for. Therefore, we must prepare for the imminent arrival of more Afghan nationals.

Similarly, thousands of Los Angeles County residents have served as military personnel, non-governmental and healthcare workers in the 20-year war. Some are still currently in Kabul, assisting with the evacuation efforts. They have established relationships and connections to the Afghan people and allies with whom they served alongside. Many are feeling a sense of grief as the Afghan government is falling. Others are traumatized and concerned about the well-being of their friends and family. Furthermore, loved ones of fallen service members who served in Afghanistan are experiencing similar agony. The County's Departments of Military and Veteran Affairs and Mental Health have available resources to assist with this tragic and evolving situation.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs, in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health, other relevant County departments, the California Department of Veteran Affairs and the United States Department of Veteran Affairs, to identify and coordinate all available resources for Los Angeles County Afghan veterans and returning military personnel, including outreaching to loved ones of fallen service members who are impacted by the current events.

**I, FURTHER, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs' Office of Immigrant Affairs, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Office, the Office of Emergency Management, and all relevant County departments, state, federal, and non-governmental agencies, to provide a written report back in 30 days, which should include the following:

1. An assessment of any eligible services that the County can provide to newly arrived Afghan nationals, including but not be limited to cash aid, medical and mental health care, workforce development and immigration legal assistance.
2. A coordinated execution plan to expeditiously link and provide the services identified above to newly arrived Afghan nationals, with a focus on the most vulnerable populations and those who plan to resettle in Los Angeles County.

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