

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 30, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro N. Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington D.C. 20016

The Honorable Ur M. Jaddou
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
5900 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, Maryland 20588

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Director Jaddou:

We write to express our concern over the application filing fee for vulnerable Afghans seeking admission to the United States through humanitarian parole. In order to expedite the processing of these requests and enable the admission of more at-risk Afghans without any other path to entry into the United States, we request that you waive all application fees for Afghan nationals seeking parole into the United States. In addition, for those Afghans who have already applied for parole, we urge United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to first process parole requests before reviewing any applicant's request for a waiver.

Humanitarian parole provides temporary admission for those who have otherwise exhausted every other means to enter the United States during a compelling emergency. As you know, those applying for parole, including many United States citizens supporting those applications, must pay a \$575 filing fee for each application for admission into the United States. This fee can be prohibitive for many attempting to flee a warzone. In an effort to assist those unable to pay this fee, USCIS developed a waiver process for applicants to have their requests considered without having to pay any fee.¹²

Unfortunately, it's our understanding that an applicant's parole request *cannot even be considered* until USCIS adjudicates that applicant's fee waiver request. This requirement can slow the parole process considerably, which is unacceptable in dangerous time-sensitive situations. Put simply, vulnerable Afghans shouldn't have to demonstrate their financial need during a crisis in order to have their parole request considered. Without adjustments, this process will create an unnecessary backlog for humanitarian parole requests.

In recent weeks, our offices have been inundated with tens of thousands of requests from at-risk Afghans attempting to enter the United States. For 20 years, the United States has relied on Afghans' invaluable support and assistance to carry out our mission. It is heart-wrenching that their lives may be at risk without additional assistance from the United States.

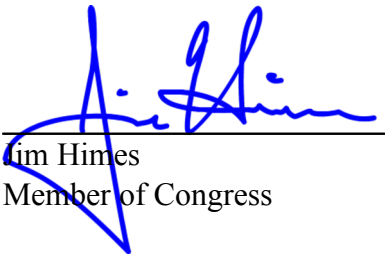
¹https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/memos/FeeWaiverGuidelines_Established_by_the_Final%20Rule_USCISFeeSchedule.pdf

² <https://www.uscis.gov/i-912>


We appreciate USCIS' efforts to expeditiously review thousands of parole applications and assist individuals granted parole into the United States. While we recognize the immense strain that USCIS personnel are under, we must streamline this process in order to facilitate the admission of more vulnerable Afghans. We can help countless more Afghans if USCIS both provides a blanket waiver of fees for future humanitarian parole applicants and ensures that those who have already applied are considered without delay.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.


Sincerely,



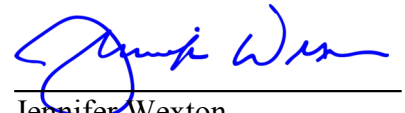
Jim Himes
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Barbara Lee
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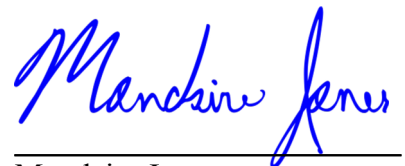
Eleanor Holmes Norton
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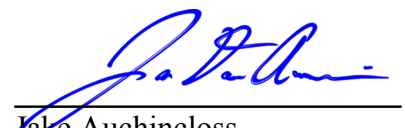
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Jake Auchincloss
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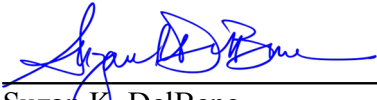
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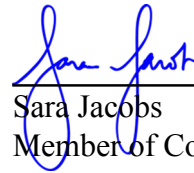
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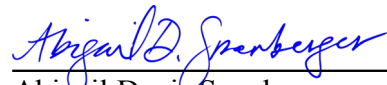
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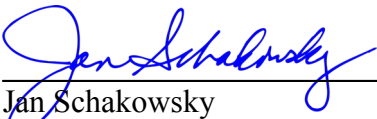
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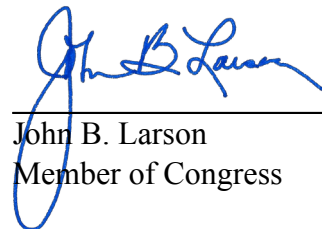
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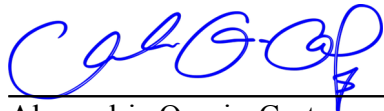
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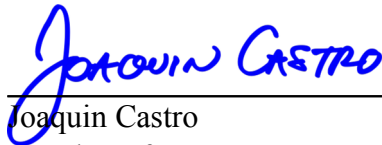
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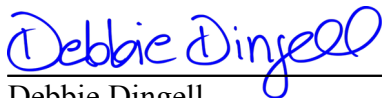
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