



TELL CONGRESS TO WAIVE THE SPONSORSHIP REQUIREMENT

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

As mentioned above, humanitarian parole is the only way that Afghans who remain in Afghanistan can get legal permission to enter the US and seek asylum. However, in addition to the filing fee, discussed above, if the petitioner has insufficient income or assets as is required by the federal government, he or she must find someone to file an Affidavit of Support. The Affidavit can be signed by any person—relative or non-relative—and can even be signed by an institution such as a mosque, church or a synagogue. The Affiant, or the person who signs it, is swearing in the Affidavit that he, she or the institution will ensure that the humanitarian parole applicant will not become a public charge, i.e. will receive sufficient support from the Affiant so that the applicant will not need to access any public benefits.

Even in normal circumstances, this requirement is onerous and nonsensical. There is plenty of data that shows that immigrants, whether they do ultimately use public benefits for a period of time or don't, end up paying more than they ever use in tax dollars. And what immigrants bring to our country, even beyond the benefits they contribute to our economy, is far richer than anything that they might use. In the current circumstance, where Afghans were forced to flee at a moment's notice because of the actions of our own government, it is even more egregious to require that they swear or find someone to swear on their behalf that their loved ones left behind in Afghanistan will not become a public charge. This is a barrier that is preventing several thousands of people from proceeding with humanitarian parole applications on behalf of people in immediate danger. Congress can and should eliminate that requirement.

CALL/LETTER SCRIPT

My name is _____ and I live at _____ and I vote. I am calling to demand that you: 1) publicly acknowledge that Afghan separated families must be re-united as soon as possible and 2) work with the President and USCIS to ensure that they eliminate the public charge requirements for humanitarian parole. Expecting humanitarian-based applicants to support themselves is outrageous and inconsistent with the intentions behind our refugee and asylum laws. The United States cannot only provide humanitarian remedies to the wealthy and still be in good standing with its international partners. Failure to do this small thing will have large impacts across the world as charges that the US abandons its allies get louder and as Afghans that have been resettled here are forced to begin their new lives without their families. We have never required those seeking refugee status to prove that they will not become a public charge. Those seeking humanitarian parole are doing so because they are forced to flee, like refugees, and their lives are in danger just like a refugees are. There is no justification for requiring humanitarian parole applicants to prove that they will not become a public charge if their petitions are granted.

To this script, it would be more effective if you were able to add any kind of personal story – either about your own or your family’s immigration experience if there was humanitarian need, or about a loved one, a colleague, a neighbor, or a friend. If you have no personal immigration stories you can add information about why you think it is important to make sure that there is a remedy for all, without regard to they can prove that once they arrive here, they will not need public assistance.

Contact your legislators and the **President** directly and ask them to eliminate the requirement that Afghans seeking humanitarian parole prove that they will not become a public charge.