

WESTCHESTER
JEWISH 
COALITION FOR
IMMIGRATION

March 26, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the Executive Committee at Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration, write today to express our unwavering support for the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program for Afghan and Iraqi civilians who assisted the United States in their respective countries and we commend your recent actions (including Executive Order #14013) to support this program. But more needs to be done.

As you know, the United States employed 7,000 local Afghan and Iraqi translators following the September 11th terror attacks. Unfortunately, these men, women, and their families now face death threats from ISIS, the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other hostile groups because of their service to the U.S. and our allies. Many have already been killed. Your Executive Order could take up to 12-18 months to be fully implemented. In that time more SIV's may be murdered. We ask that you prioritize the processing of SIV applications and consider bringing in all 7,000 SIV's and their families into the U.S. as soon as possible. Our government has, as others have said, a moral and ethical responsibility to do so.

Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration (WJCI)
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The SIV program has had (and continues to have) bipartisan support from Congress, previous administrations, prominent military leaders, diplomats, and national security experts—including Gen. John Nicholson, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, Gen. David Petraeus, and Amb. Ryan Crocker. And while the program has provided refuge to some of our Afghan and Iraqi employees, there is much more work to be done. At a minimum thousands of Afghans and Iraqis are still waiting for their visas to be processed.

We respectfully request that you and your administration increase communication with Congress and non-governmental organizations that work with SIV applicants to have a constructive dialogue about admitting all 7,000 SIV's. We stand ready to work with your administration to ensure that the Special Immigrant Visa program offers protection to those who assisted U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Sincerely,

The Executive Committee of WJCI*

Holly Rosen Fink, Westchester Jewish Center and WJCI Co-Founder
Alan Himmelstein, Temple Israel of White Plains
Howard Horowitz, Temple Israel of New Rochelle
Eric Levine, Hebrew Institute of White Plains and WJCI Co-Founder
Laura J. Lewis, Beth El Synagogue Center
Ruth Rothseid, Park Avenue Synagogue
Jeff R. Swarz, Beth El Synagogue Center

**Affiliations for identification purposes only*

cc: Alejandro Majorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security
Antony Blinken, Secretary of State
Congressman Mondaire Jones
Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney
Congressman Jamaal Bowman
Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

Footnote: This Letter has been adapted from a letter from 6 Congressional Offices posted on the No One Left website.

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