



## PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **VVA Urges Congress to Take Action Help us Keep Our Promise to Our Afghan Military Allies**

(Washington, D.C.)—"Today, Vietnam Veterans of America, along with four veterans service organizations, urged Congress to take action to grant asylum to our Afghan military allies whose lives are in danger as a result of their loyal service to our nation's military," said John Rowan, VVA National President.

"Since the founding of our nation, immigrants have played a vital role in the U.S military, and they've been a tremendous part of what makes America great -- one only needs to see the number of immigrants whose names are etched into the black granite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial," said Rowan. "After recent reports of a purge of immigrants from the military and the bureaucratic strangling of service-for-citizenship programs, the time has come for to fix this mess, once and for all."

In a letter sent to members of the House and Senate, Vietnam Veterans of America--together with Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, High Ground Advocacy, Veterans for American Ideals, and No one Left Behind--called on members of Congress to allocate four thousand visas through the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program, for those who served alongside U.S. troops at great personal risk. The Congress has the opportunity to allocate the visas in the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2019, which may be passed in the coming weeks.

In 2009 Congress passed the *Afghan Allies Protection Act*. The visas allotted in the act allowed wartime allies in Afghanistan to resettle in the United States. The Afghan program has consistently been amended and extended in order to provide haven to those supporting the ongoing mission in Afghanistan. In the last three years, Congress has authorized 10,500 more visas for Afghan wartime allies, either through the National Defense Authorization Act, or the Consolidated Appropriations Act.

Last month Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) called for an additional four thousand visas in [a letter](#) to Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL)-and Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT), and State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-SC).

