



**Committee on Migration**

**c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB**

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July 21, 2021

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

*VIA EMAIL*

Dear Representative:

I write on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration (USCCB/COM) to express our support for H.R. 3985, the "Averting Loss of Life and Injury by Expediting SIVs Act of 2021" or the "Allies Act of 2021". We urge you to support this bipartisan bill when it is brought before the full House of Representatives.

The Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program was created in 2009 with our support. The goal of the program is to offer resettlement in the United States to Afghan translators, contractors, and security personnel who face danger in Afghanistan because of their assistance to the United States during the conflict there. Unfortunately, the program is plagued by significant processing delays. Consequently, applicants face severe backlogs, with wait times stretching multiple years.

The Allies Act of 2021 would amend the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 to streamline the SIV application process and increase the number of visas available. More specifically, the bill would revise the criteria for SIV petitions and provide an additional 8,000 visas for the program.

My brother bishops and I continue to pray for peace in Afghanistan. However, as the United States pursues a withdrawal of U.S. forces, reports indicate that many Afghan allies and their families have been killed or targeted because of their work with the United States. These dangers are likely to increase in the coming weeks. The Catholic Church proclaims the sanctity of all human life. As a country, we should offer protection to those whose lives are now threatened for the mere act of serving alongside Americans.

For these reasons, we ask that the House pass the Allies Act of 2021.

Sincerely,

Most Rev. Mario E. Dorsonville  
Auxiliary Bishop of Washington  
Chair, USCCB Committee on Migration