



NEW YORK
CITY BAR

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July 30, 2021

Via Facsimile and E-Mail

To: Members of the New York State Congressional Delegation

Re: Afghan Journalists, Interpreters, and Support Staff Who Worked with U.S. News Organizations

Dear Members of Congress,

We represent various constituencies of the New York City Bar Association with expertise on diverse issues, including freedom of the press and immigration law and policy. On July 20, 2021, some two dozen U.S. news organizations, trade associations, and non-profits sent a letter to the leadership in the Senate and House.¹ That letter urged that Congress create a visa program for Afghans who worked with the U.S. press and now seek safety in the United States. We urge the members of the New York Congressional Delegation to support this effort; the matter is urgent.

These Afghans – journalists, interpreters, and support staff – worked hand in hand with U.S. news organizations over the last two decades to tell your constituents and everyone around the world what was transpiring in Afghanistan. These foreign nationals are the “interpreters, guides, source finders and occasional lifesavers” for U.S. journalists abroad.² They operate often under impossible circumstances. And some have lost their lives, at the hands of the Taliban, in

¹ Available at <https://www.nytcob.com/press/coalition-urges-u-s-to-provide-visas-to-afghans-who-worked-with-press/> (all websites last visited July 29, 2021).

² Ayub Nuri, *At War, at Home, at Risk*, N.Y. TIMES (July 29, 2007), <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/29/magazine/29iraqi-t.html>.

About the Association

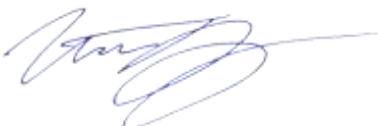
The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has 25,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world.

service of the idea that people around the world should *know* what was happening on the ground. Threats to their lives and their families will only increase as the U.S. drawdown continues.

We understand that the way to bring these Afghans to safety in the United States is through legislation expanding the current Special Immigration Visa program. And we further understand that representatives from the news organization, trade group, and non-profit signatories of the July 20 correspondence continue to advocate for the passage of such legislation. We add our voice to these efforts in the hopes that it will draw further attention to the urgent need to protect these partners abroad.

We thank you in advance for your prompt and thoughtful consideration of this letter.

Respectfully,



Matthew L. Schafer, Chair
Communications & Media Law Committee



Danny Alicea, Chair
Immigration & Nationality Law Committee

Cc: Hon. John Cornyn
Hon. Jason Crow
Hon. Dick Durbin
Hon. Chuck Grassley
Hon. Jim Jordan
Hon. Adam Kinzinger
Hon. Zoe Lofgren
Hon. Kevin McCarthy
Hon. Tom McClintock
Hon. Mitch McConnell
Hon. Alex Padilla
Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Hon. Jeanne Shaheen