

# Afghan Refugee Advocacy:

## Pass the Afghan Adjustment Act!

In August 2021, the U.S. withdrew its military forces from Afghanistan after a 20-year conflict. As part of the Doha agreement, signed by then-President Trump in February 2020, the U.S. agreed to a complete withdrawal of military forces by September 2021. As the Afghan government collapsed, the Taliban quickly seized control of the Kabul and instituted martial law. Thousands of Afghans - those who worked alongside the U.S. military or other forces, as well as ethnic and religious minorities already under threat - have been forced to flee their homes in fear of kidnap, torture, and execution.

**Applicants have to travel to Fort Smith, Arkansas, where few resources exist.**



Since September 2021, Oklahoma has accepted over 1,800 Afghan parolees, who are now settling in as our neighbors, colleagues, and friends. Their children are enrolling in schools, and the adults are joining the workforce as contributing members to society. Slowly, they are rebuilding their lives.

However, in order to secure their status here, they must adjust their status after arrival, by applying either for asylum or a special immigrant visa. Both processes are expensive, lengthy, and time consuming, and the outcome is uncertain.

The SIV system is backlogged by over 70,000 cases, and the asylum system has over 1.4 million cases in its queue. Forcing these families to wait means they risk losing jobs, homes, and their legal status in the U.S. - they could be sent back into the war zone they fled.

**Oklahoma accepted more refugees per capita than any other state, but we do not have an asylum office to handle these applications.**

In August 2022, a bipartisan Afghan Adjustment Act was filed in both the House and the Senate with support from a wide group of legislators. If passed, it would prevent thousands of Afghans from losing their jobs or being deported as their cases get through the backlogged immigration system. Now, we need our federal delegates to act with courage and integrity by voting for the Afghan Adjustment Act, helping our new neighbors secure a clearer pathway to permanent residency and a brighter future as new Oklahoma neighbors.

**Similar adjustment acts have helped thousands of Cubans, Vietnamese, and Iraqis who fled violence in their homelands to establish thriving communities in the U.S.**

**We need our delegates to vote for the Afghan Adjustment Act and help our friends secure their new lives in Oklahoma!**



**Oklahoma has accepted 1,800 Afghan arrivals - the third largest number in the nation, and the highest number per capita of any state.**