



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE

August 26, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

I write to you today to affirm Washington State's support for the Afghan people, who now face the threat of violence and subjugation by the resurgent Taliban in their home country. As you continue to take all measures necessary to provide swift passage for those fortunate enough to reach safety outside of Afghanistan, I can affirm that Washington stands ready to aid. I commend you for the recent acceleration of evacuations in recent days, contributing to a total of over 100,000 people evacuated from Afghanistan since July. While the pace of evacuation is, understandably, your focus right now, I want to emphasize the needs of targeted populations of Afghans, especially women and children who face unique threats from the Taliban.

Since 1975, Washington has welcomed nearly 150,000 refugees from 70 different countries. These remarkable individuals have contributed significantly to Washington's economy and culture; they and their descendants are now inextricably connected with our future prosperity. In the past decade, almost 5,000 of these refugees have hailed from Afghanistan. Carrying with them the trauma of war, they nonetheless contribute significantly to our state in varied professional fields, including home care, retail, healthcare, financial planning, and transportation. Many have served as essential workers, protecting the health of Washingtonians and enabling life to continue over the past 18 months. Washington remains ready to provide aid to Afghans who find themselves in peril after these last 20 years of conflict, just as these members of our community once did.

Anticipating the arrival of new refugees, Washington's state and local agencies are mobilizing to coordinate resettlement services, financial assistance, and housing. Concurrently, a groundswell of support has arisen from companies, community organizations, and individuals, all offering to

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contribute time and resources to the relief effort. I am heartened by the news that Washington will have another opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to embrace those in need.

While you consider all ways to rapidly airlift tens of thousands of people, I hope that you work to ensure services are readily available without regard to visa status – including resettlement programming, work authorization, and financial assistance – and to mitigate the imposition of costs or fees onto these vulnerable individuals.

I am exceedingly grateful for your leadership during these especially challenging times, and I look forward to advancing your support of the Afghan people.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Inslee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jay Inslee  
Governor