VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA
NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION'S WEEKLY REPORT

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June 29 – July 5, 2024

Meetings

- NS Staff worked with the Legislative Division to coordinate outreach efforts for Afghan Adjustment Act-related efforts.

- NS Staff compiled a comprehensive briefing package for the Executive Director to facilitate a phone call with Senator Klobuchar. The package includes detailed background information and key talking points for discussing an amendment to the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) concerning the Afghan Adjustment Act.

- NS Staff communicated with the representative of the Chairman of the Korean Veterans Association to discuss details of their upcoming meeting with the National Commander. Staff will be providing talking points from their previous visit with the KVC in South Korea during December 2023.

- NS Staff met with staff from the Atlantic Council regarding an upcoming NATO Public forum event.

- NS Staff met with the Sergeant Major, United States Marine Corps Recruiting Command to discuss his participation in an upcoming event during national convention.

- NS Staff met with the G-9 Sergeant Major, SGM Mike Perry, to coordinate a meeting with the Army Recruiting Command Sergeant Major who will be participating at an event during the upcoming national convention.

Policy

- NS Staff continued to review military medical malpractice suits and identify lapses in the claims process.

- NS Staff is expanding research on the war in Sudan to analyze how the displacement of Sudanese refugees will affect the stability of surrounding countries.

- NS Staff continues to follow the protests in Kenya and examine their potential effects on the United States' diplomatic relations with the country.

- NS Staff continues to monitor the tension between Israel and the terrorist organization Hezbollah amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

- NS Staff continuously monitors the ongoing military exercises between Russian warships and Cuba, with recent developments indicating that the warships are docking in Venezuela.

- NS Staff drafted a letter of support for the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act amendment to include provisions of the Afghanistan Adjustment Act, pending approval from the Division Director.

Programs

- NS Staff sent congratulatory letters to all seven Spirit of Service Award winners and is finalizing their National Convention itineraries.

- NS Staff communicated with a representative from TACOM to facilitate the fulfillment of departmental requests.

- NS Staff has communicated with the National Firefighter of the Year regarding his travel arrangements for the National Convention.

- NS Staff is collaborating with the Internal Affairs and Membership Division to ensure the completion of membership for all seven Spirit of Service Award winners.

The American Legion Military Surplus Equipment

- Items requested: Ammo - 9,920; Rifles - 0; Clips - 0; Displays - 1
- Requests submitted by: Posts - 6; Departments - 6

POW/MIA

July 2, 2024

- Airman Accounted for from WWII (Samoski, S.)
- Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Travers, J.)
- Solider Accounted for from Korean War (Simmons, W.)

DPAA has identified/repatriated 108 service members this year.

Be The One (BTO)

- NS Staff continues to monitor the Department of Defense and services for updates/initiatives as it pertains to Suicide Prevention Awareness and mental health for all servicemembers, including the Reserve Component.

Focus Topic: The Afghan Adjustment Act (AAA)

The Afghan Adjustment Act is a significant piece of proposed legislation aimed at addressing the legal status of Afghan nationals who were evacuated to the United States following the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021. The sudden fall of Kabul to the Taliban led to the evacuation of thousands of Afghan allies, including interpreters, support staff, and their families, who had assisted U.S. forces and faced imminent danger due to their association with the U.S. government.

Many of these evacuees are in the United States under temporary humanitarian parole, which typically lasts for two years and **does not** provide a clear pathway to permanent residency. The Afghan Adjustment Act seeks to rectify this uncertainty by offering these individuals an opportunity to apply for lawful permanent resident status, commonly known as a green card, after undergoing additional security vetting. According to the latest figures from June 2022, over 76,000 evacuees reside in the United States.[1]

Key Provisions:

- Eligibility Requirements: The act outlines specific eligibility criteria for Afghan nationals, including those paroled into the U.S. between particular dates surrounding the evacuation and those who have undergone rigorous security checks.

- Application Process: To apply for permanent residency, eligible Afghan nationals must undergo an additional background check and security screening process to ensure they do not threaten national security. This process addresses potential concerns about the initial vetting procedures during the chaotic evacuation.

- Family Reunification: The act also includes provisions for family reunification, allowing spouses and children of eligible Afghan nationals to apply for adjustment of status alongside their primary applicants.

The rationale behind the Afghan Adjustment Act is multifaceted. First and foremost, it acknowledges the moral and ethical responsibility of the United States to those who risked their lives in support of U.S. missions in Afghanistan. By providing a pathway to permanent residency, the act aims to offer stability and security to Afghan evacuees, many of whom left behind their homes, jobs, and extended families. These individuals, including their family members, face execution or imprisonment should they return to Afghanistan because of the assistance they provided to the American military.

From a practical perspective, the act would also alleviate pressure on the U.S. immigration system by providing a streamlined process for a defined group of individuals rather than leaving them in a state of legal limbo that could lead to increased asylum claims and related legal proceedings.

The Afghan Adjustment Act has garnered bipartisan support, with advocates highlighting the importance of fulfilling commitments to Afghan allies and demonstrating the U.S.'s commitment

[1] https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47165/1

to humanitarian values. However, there are concerns about national security and the adequacy of vetting procedures, which proponents of the act address by emphasizing the rigorous additional screening included in the legislation.

As of July 2024, the Afghan Adjustment Act remains in limbo in the Senate Judiciary Committee without enough bipartisan support to move the bill out of committee and onto the Senate floor for a vote.

Cosponsors include:[2]

Sen. Durbin, Richard [D-IL]
Sen. Coons, Christopher A. [D-DE]
Sen. Moran, Jerry [R-KS]
Sen. Blumenthal, Richard [D-CT]
Sen. Murkowski, Lisa [R-AK]
Sen. Shaheen, Jeanne [D-NH]
Sen. Wicker, Roger F. [R-MS]
Sen. Tillis, Thomas [R-NC]
Sen. Graham, Lindsey [R-SC]
Sen. Mullin, Markwayne [R-OK]
Sen. Menendez, Robert [D-NJ]
Sen. Cassidy, Bill [R-LA]
Sen. Reed, Jack [D-RI]
Sen. Risch, James E. [R-ID]
Sen. Crapo, Mike [R-ID]
Sen. Sinema, Kyrsten [I-AZ]
Sen. King, Angus S., Jr. [I-ME]

The Afghan Adjustment Act represents a crucial legislative effort to provide Afghan evacuees with a clear and secure pathway to permanent residency in the United States. By addressing the immediate legal uncertainties these individuals face and ensuring thorough security vetting, the act aims to uphold the United States' humanitarian commitments while reinforcing national security.

All American Legion leadership is cordially advised to be on the lookout for pending grassroots efforts on AAA in the next week. The National Security Commission will need maximum participation by all members of the commission, council and committees for this effort to gain more support in Congress.

[2] https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/2327/cosponsors