

# Human Rights First

## Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

[\*\*https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/protecting-our-allies\*\*](https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/protecting-our-allies)

### Policy Issue Resources

Work With Asylum Seekers

If you are seeking asylum, we can help

Areas of Focus

Current Initiatives

Over the last fifteen years, thousands of Afghans working primarily as interpreters and translators have provided crucial support to the U.S. military. Because of their affiliation with the United States, they have faced vicious persecution and violence from the Taliban.

It became clear that the U.S. government needed a program designed to bring these allies to safety. This was a matter of keeping faith with both these Afghan allies, who had risked their lives to work with the United States, and U.S. troops, who had made an implicit promise to protect them.

To help them was to live up to our country's commitment to the persecuted. It was also in the strategic interest of the United States. If the U.S. military didn't keep its promises to these Afghans, who would ever trust it again?

So with broad bipartisan support Congress passed the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, which provided Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs). The program has been a lifeline for thousands of Afghans and their families.

But in 2016 misplaced budgetary concerns and animus toward Muslims and refugees put this important program on the chopping block. So our new initiative Veterans for American Ideals made saving the program its top priority.

Already with thousands of members across the country, Veterans for American Ideals generated support for the program both at grassroots and on Capitol Hill. For them, this issue was personal. Many had worked with Afghans or Iraqis during overseas deployments; all believe the United States should be a safe haven.

We won. Even in the midst of a presidential election that featured anti-Muslim rhetoric, we secured Congressional reauthorization for this essential program.

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Urge Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act

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