

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 12, 2017

**PRESS CONTACT**

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[hdessaules@refugeerights.org](mailto:hdessaules@refugeerights.org)**IRAP APPLAUDS BIPARTISAN SUPPORT PROTECTING U.S. ALLIES IN AFGHANISTAN**

**New York, NY** – The [International Refugee Assistance Project](#) (IRAP) at the Urban Justice Center applauds Congress' decision to allocate 3,500 visas to Afghan allies who are at risk for providing faithful service to the United States in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018. The NDAA conferees also affirmed their belief that the Afghan special immigrant visa (SIV) program "continues to be critical for the U.S. Government's operations in Afghanistan." IRAP is deeply grateful to our congressional champions for valiantly working to include these additional visas, providing relief to thousands of individuals.

"Every single day, our troops rely on the service and expertise of heroic Afghan partners who put themselves in danger to help the United States' mission in Afghanistan," **said Betsy Fisher, IRAP's Policy Director.** "The overwhelming bipartisan support for the SIV program only emphasizes its national security importance and our faithful commitment to those who served for us."

The Afghan SIV program, established in 2009, provides a pipeline to safety for America's most trusted allies: Afghans who worked for the United States as interpreters, security personnel, cultural advisors, and in other capacities, and who are often targeted and threatened by the Taliban and local militias as a result of their service.

IRAP extends its gratitude to Senate champions Armed Services Chairman John McCain (R-AZ), Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC), and Armed Services Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-RI); and House champions Armed Services Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-TX), Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL), Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA), and Armed Services Ranking Member Adam Smith (D-CA). IRAP is deeply grateful for their leadership and bipartisan efforts to advance this important national security program. IRAP is also grateful to advocates Beena Patel and Josh Andrews of FaegreBD, Scott Cooper of Human Rights First, and Refugee Council USA.

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International Refugee Assistance Project at the Urban Justice Center

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