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PRESS CONTACT

Henrike Dessaules
646.459.3081

hdessaules@refugeerights.org

IRAP LAUDS INTRODUCTION OF BILL TO AUTHORIZE ADDITIONAL VISAS FOR AFGHAN ALLIES

NEW YORK, NY – IRAP welcomes legislation to provide more visas to Afghan allies through the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program. A bipartisan group of Senators, Sens. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), John McCain (R-AZ), Jack Reed (D-RI), and Thom Tillis (R-NC), partnered to introduce legislation to authorize 2,500 additional visas for Afghans who worked with the U.S. military and U.S. Government in Afghanistan. IRAP expects a companion bill to be introduced by Reps. Kinzinger (R-IL), Blumenauer (D-OR), Stivers (R-OG), and Moulton (D-MA). This bill will address the shortage of visas, which has led the State Department to suspend all Afghan SIV interviews since last week.

Betsy Fisher, IRAP's Policy Director, said: "IRAP and our partners warned last year that the supply of visas for our Afghan allies would run out this spring. We are deeply grateful to this bipartisan group of Senators and Representatives for their prompt action to address this program, which is vital to our national security."

The Afghan SIV program was created by Congress in 2009 to provide a legal path to safety for Afghans who worked for the United States in Afghanistan and who face serious threats as a result of that work. It has been extended since 2009 several times with broad bipartisan support.

International Refugee Assistance Project at the Urban Justice Center

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40 Rector St., 9th Floor, New York, NY 10006

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