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Shaheen Calls for Additional Visas For Afghan Interpreters & Support Staff in Annual Defense Bill

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Shaheen calls for 4,000 additional Afghan Special Immigrant Visas for those whose lives are in danger for supporting the U.S. mission

(Washington, DC) – U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), **a senior member of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees**, sent a letter to Senate and House Armed Services Committee leaders urging them to authorize an additional 4,000 Afghan Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) in the fiscal year (FY) 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that is currently being negotiated by Senate and House conferees. The letter was also signed by U.S. Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS).

The SIV program has been critical to American national security and the U.S. mission in Afghanistan, allowing Afghans who have supported and saved the lives of American service members and diplomatic personnel in Afghanistan to escape life-threatening situations as a result of their work supporting Americans.

Shaheen wrote, “Through this program, the United States is able to demonstrate our commitment to those who put themselves at risk—encouraging others in Afghanistan and worldwide to do the same for our troops and diplomatic corps. If Congress fails to authorize these additional visas, thousands of Afghans in the application pipeline or otherwise eligible to apply will be in jeopardy.”

The letter can be read in full [here](#).

Senator Shaheen [is a leader in Congress](#) in support of the Afghan SIV program. In this year’s annual defense legislation that cleared the Senate, she worked to include language that prioritized [the reauthorization of Afghan SIVs](#). Shaheen [has led bipartisan efforts](#) in Congress to approve and secure additional Afghan SIVs, and historically partnered with the late Senator John McCain (R-AZ) on this effort. Last year, Shaheen [introduced new bipartisan legislation](#) that would reauthorize 4,000 Afghan SIVs.

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