



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

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## Joint Hearing Statement of Oversight, Management, & Accountability Subcommittee Chairman Lou Correa (D-CA)

### *Operation Allies Welcome: Examining DHS's Efforts to Resettle Vulnerable Afghans*

October 21, 2021

We're here this afternoon to discuss Operation Allies Welcome, the effort led by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to resettle Afghan evacuees and ensure they have the support necessary to build new homes here in America. We know that this transition will not be an easy one. To leave one's home and resettle in a new country is a difficult undertaking, no matter the reason. And unfortunately, many of our Afghan allies have faced hardships long before arriving in the United States.

The Federal Government evacuated thousands of our allies and brought them to America for a safer and more prosperous life, but that is hardly where our obligation to them ends. We now face the much greater challenge of finding communities where these evacuees can build a new life and providing them with ongoing support. This means ensuring that our allies will have access to long-term housing and employment, as well as access to basic human needs like health care, food, and clothing.

Thankfully, Americans across the country are welcoming Afghan evacuees into their cities with open arms. This should come as no surprise since it is a long held American tradition to welcome those who seek a better life. And it is a tradition that makes us stronger as a nation.

I have had the opportunity to observe first hand how refugees can bring new life and new opportunities to American cities. My district is home to a large community of Vietnamese-Americans, many of whom resettled in Southern California after the Vietnam war. They have built a home in the United States and enriched our society, contributing to the creation of a more diverse and prosperous community. I have no doubt that our Afghan allies will do the same in the cities that they settle into.

We are fortunate to have seen an incredible outpouring of support, including from the veteran, faith, and Afghan American communities. While the Department of Homeland Security seeks to provide support and coordination services for these organizations, it is civil society that has stepped up to deliver the local and long-term care for Afghan evacuees.

I am pleased to welcome today representatives from four non-governmental organizations that are working directly with the government to ensure that our Afghan allies have access to that care. This month, evacuees began moving out of temporary housing at military bases and into the local communities that have welcomed them. But many are still waiting to see their new homes for the first time.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses how we can best support Afghans during this critical period and what additional support may be necessary from DHS and other Federal partners to ensure this transition goes smoothly. I think we can all agree that we owe it to our Afghan allies to get this one right.

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