



CONSENT CALENDAR
September 28, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Taplin, Mayor Arreguín (co-author), Councilmember Hahn
(Co-Sponsor)
Subject: Resolution in Support of Afghan Refugees

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution in support of refugees from Afghanistan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

BACKGROUND

Following the conclusion of the two-decade War in Afghanistan, the United States anticipates the immediate arrival of thousands of refugees fleeing the Taliban government. U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA) has requested that the State Department streamline and expedite the issuance of special immigrant visas (SIVs) to evacuate refugees.¹ Governor Gavin Newsom has requested \$16.7 million in the state budget to aid resettling refugees.² The City of Berkeley must voice its support for these efforts.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Taplin Council District 2 510-981-7120

Attachments:

1: Resolution

¹ <https://www.padilla.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/Afghan-Parole-Letter-8.25.21.pdf>

² Associated Press. (Sept. 4, 2021). "California Governor seeks \$16.7 Million in Aid for Afghan Refugees." Retrieved from <https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/california/california-governor-seeks-16-7m-in-aid-for-afghan-refugees/2648391/>

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF AFGHAN REFUGEES

WHEREAS, the ongoing uncertainty and violence in Afghanistan and the takeover of the Afghan government by the Taliban has created a humanitarian crisis, with rapidly deteriorating human rights and reductions in safety particularly for vulnerable individuals, including, but not limited to: women and girls, members of the LGBT community, those who have direct ties to the U.S. government and military, members of ethnic minority communities, those who are Shi'a Muslim, adherents of non-Muslim faiths, including those of Sikh and Hindu faiths, and individuals who work for or have ties to aid organizations; and;

WHEREAS, refugees and their families face a multitude of challenges when arriving in the United States and transitioning to a new life, including but not limited to; resettlement, language barriers, understanding cultural nuances, financial hardship, accessing education, finding work and legal status; and

WHEREAS, federal and state leaders in California, specifically in Alameda County, home to the largest concentration of Afghans and Afghan Americans in the United States and the greater Bay Area, have the unique and moral responsibility to welcome Afghan refugees in our communities, while honoring the commitments of the United States government, assisting in the evacuation of vulnerable groups, providing support to organizations who will serve the refugee community, and showing support for the Afghan community during this difficult time;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley supports and welcomes refugees from Afghanistan into our community and urges our state and federal leaders to act immediately and with determination, and rightfully bring at-risk and vulnerable Afghan peoples and their families to the United States for safety and prosperity and be afforded full benefits to transition into American life; and encourages California to accept more, and house more, Afghan refugees than any other US State;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley supports access to significant opportunities and benefits to individuals and families arriving from Afghanistan, including, but not limited to: immediate eligibility for reception and placement afforded under Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) and refugee status conditions within a week of arriving on US soil.