

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 3, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20016

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Blinken, Secretary Mayorkas, Secretary Becerra, and Secretary Austin:

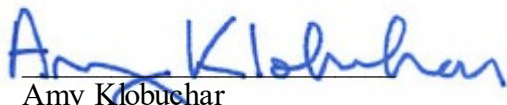
We support the continuing international and interagency evacuation efforts to safely bring American citizens, Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants, Priority 1 and 2 designees, vulnerable Afghans, and their families to the United States. As you seek to help Afghan evacuees resettle, we ask that you prioritize the needs of women and marginalized groups in the evacuation and resettlement process.


The United States has worked for the past 20 years to help educate, empower, and support women in business ventures, political roles, and other social opportunities in Afghanistan. With the Taliban in power, many women have been forced to evacuate to protect themselves and their loved ones. Those leading the evacuation efforts must consider how women's livelihoods, health, employment, and social participation have been impacted by leaving their homes. For example, the Department of Defense confirmed that at least three women delivered babies during the evacuation. We must ensure that women and girls have access to the resources they need. This includes providing obstetrician services to pregnant women, psychosocial support to help women process trauma and the change in their circumstance, child medical and educational care, mitigation procedures for sexual assault and financial predation, and help with family reunification.

In order to live up to our commitment to support Afghan refugees, we must offer significant focus to women's needs in the evacuation and relocation process. We look forward to working with you to help women evacuees relocate safely and with the support they need.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

  
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

  
Susan Collins  
United States Senator