

AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 117-

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OFFERED BY MS. SPEIER OF CALIFORNIA

Add at the end of title LX of division E the following:

1 **SEC. _____. AFGHAN REFUGEES OF SPECIAL HUMANI-**
2 **TARIAN CONCERN.**

3 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of State, in con-
4 sultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall
5 designate as Priority 2 refugees of special humanitarian
6 concern the following individuals:

7 (1) Individuals who—

8 (A) are or were habitual residents of Af-
9 ghanistan;

10 (B) are nationals of Afghanistan or state-
11 less persons;

12 (C) have suffered persecution or have a
13 well-founded fear of persecution; and

14 (D) share common occupational character-
15 istics that identify them as targets of persecu-
16 tion in Afghanistan on account of race, religion,
17 nationality, membership in a particular social

1 group, or political opinion, as determined by the
2 Secretary of State, including the following:

3 (i) Civil servants.

4 (ii) Public officials and government
5 personnel, including members of the peace
6 negotiation team.

7 (iii) Democracy and human rights de-
8 fenders.

9 (iv) Women's rights defenders.

10 (v) Journalists and media personnel.

11 (vi) Legal professionals.

12 (2) Individuals who—

13 (A) are or were habitual residents of Af-
14 ghanistan;

15 (B) are nationals of Afghanistan or state-
16 less persons; and

17 (C) were employed in Afghanistan for an
18 aggregate period of not less than 1 year by—

19 (i) a media or nongovernmental orga-
20 nization based in the United States; or

21 (ii) an organization or entity that has
22 received a grant from, or entered into a co-
23 operative agreement or contract with, the
24 United States Government.

25 (3) Individuals who—

1 (A) are or were habitual residents of Af-
2 ghanistan;

3 (B) are nationals of Afghanistan or state-
4 less persons; and

5 (C) are beneficiaries of an approved I-130
6 Petition for Alien Relative.

7 (b) PROCESSING OF AFGHAN REFUGEES.—The proc-
8 essing of individuals who are or were habitual residents
9 of Afghanistan, are nationals of Afghanistan or stateless
10 persons, and have suffered persecution, or have a well-
11 founded fear of persecution, for classification as refugees
12 may occur in Afghanistan or in a third country.

13 (c) ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION AS A REFUGEE.—
14 An alien may not be denied the opportunity to apply for
15 admission as a refugee under this section solely because
16 such alien qualifies as an immediate relative of a national
17 of the United States or is eligible for admission to the
18 United States under any other immigrant classification.

19 (d) IDENTIFICATION OF OTHER PERSECUTED
20 GROUPS.—The Secretary of State, or the designee of the
21 Secretary, is authorized to classify other groups of individ-
22 uals who are or were nationals and residents of Afghani-
23 stan as Priority 2 refugees of special humanitarian con-
24 cern.

1 (e) SATISFACTION OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—
2 Aliens designated as Priority 2 refugees of special humani-
3 tarian concern under this section shall be deemed to sat-
4 isfy the requirements under section 207 of the Immigra-
5 tion and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1157) for admission
6 to the United States.

7 (f) TIMELINE FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State and
9 the Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure
10 that all steps under the control of the United States
11 Government incidental to the approval of such appli-
12 cations, including required screenings and back-
13 ground checks, are completed not later than 6
14 months after the date on which an eligible applicant
15 submits an application under subsection (a).

16 (2) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding paragraph
17 (1), the United States Refugee Admission Program
18 may take additional time to process applications de-
19 scribed in paragraph (1) if satisfaction of national
20 security concerns requires such additional time, if
21 the Secretary of Homeland Security, or the designee
22 of the Secretary, has determined that the applicant
23 meets the requirements for status as a refugee of
24 special humanitarian concern under this section and
25 has so notified the applicant.

1 (g) ADDITIONAL FORMS OF IMMIGRATION RELIEF.—

2 The Secretary of State shall consider additional forms of
3 immigration relief available to Afghans and coordinate
4 with embassies, nongovernmental organizations, and the
5 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to re-
6 ceive referrals for individuals who—

7 (1) are or were habitual residents of Afghani-
8 stan;

9 (2) are nationals of Afghanistan or stateless
10 persons; and

11 (3) are described in subsection (a) or otherwise
12 face humanitarian concerns.

13 (h) ISSUANCE OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS.—Each offi-
14 cer or employee of the Federal Government whose official
15 duties include issuing travel documentation, diplomatic
16 notes, letters of support, or other relevant materials for
17 individuals described in subsection (a) or for nationals of
18 Afghanistan who are applying for special immigrant visas
19 or any other humanitarian relief under the immigration
20 laws, shall carry out such duties as expeditiously as pos-
21 sible, and shall prioritize facilitating the evacuation of
22 such individuals.

23 (i) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
24 gress that—

1 (1) the Secretary of State, in coordination with
2 the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of
3 Homeland Security, should establish a special hu-
4 manitarian parole program that—

5 (A) is for individuals described in sub-
6 section (a) and for nationals of Afghanistan
7 who are applying for special immigrant visas or
8 any other humanitarian relief under the immi-
9 gration laws, who are human rights defenders,
10 democracy workers, women’s rights activists,
11 women politicians, journalists, or other highly
12 visible women leaders; and

13 (B) prioritizes providing assistance for
14 women; and

15 (2) women’s organizations in Afghanistan
16 should be included as recipients of any Federal
17 funding for assistance in Afghanistan, such as for
18 food, water, and shelter, as such organizations serve
19 as trusted resources for vulnerable Afghan women
20 seeking such assistance, most often as they are flee-
21 ing direct violence and threats on their lives.

