

# United States Senate

August 27, 2021

## VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

I write to request that you designate a White House Coordinator to manage the complex, interagency domestic response to process arriving flights of U.S. Citizens, legal permanent residents (LPRs) and Afghan nationals that were originally airlifted out of Kabul, Afghanistan.

The sheer number of Federal, State and local agencies, along with private sector air carriers and airport operators, participating in mobilization efforts to evacuate U.S. citizens, LPRs and Afghan nationals, warrants the appointment of a single individual based in the White House to oversee the development of joint policies, processes and procedures to govern efforts to welcome back Americans and our Afghan allies and their family members seeking refuge and safety in the United States. Past experience demonstrates the benefit of designating a White House Coordinator to help manage comprehensive and complex governmental responses.

Balancing competing equities related to security, public health and airport operations is a difficult task that would benefit from a White House coordinator to convene the disparate entities, establish clear lines of communication and oversee a de-confliction process to efficiently work through conflicts that will inevitably arise from an interagency process that at a minimum, appears to require coordination between: the Executive Office of the President; the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), including U.S. Transportation Command; the U.S. Department of State (State); the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services; the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration; the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Office of Refugee Resettlement; the U.S. Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation; and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's National Counterterrorism Center – and that is just at the Federal level.

While the domestic portion of this historic airlift will face many challenges, there already appear to be emerging issues that require strong leadership. For example, in light of the exigent circumstances resulting from a massive airlift operation involving multiple countries and several continents, it is both likely and understandable that CBP and TSA may lack information technology systems ready to interface with the systems and processes used by DoD and State personnel to collect biographic data in Kabul.

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In addition, many activated U.S. airports may lack existing infrastructure, resources and personnel – particularly medical and translator staff – to quickly establish temporary and secure facilities on the tarmac to enable deplaning passengers and crew to go through health screenings, which includes quarantine procedures and facility locations; take care of basic hygiene needs; and wait in a safe and humane environment that is appropriate for adults and children. A single White House Coordinator would be beneficial to guide the complex planning and execution required to expeditiously carry out these tasks.

As you are aware, our Nation's mission to evacuate U.S. and allied personnel, U.S. citizens, LPRs, Special Immigrant Visa applicants and other at-risk Afghan nationals from Afghanistan does not end with the historic airlift. A coordinated whole-of-government approach will be required to successfully process individuals arriving in the United States, and provide sustained support to Afghan refugees as these future Americans seek to resettle and begin new lives in the country they served with during the Afghanistan War. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator