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IRAP DEPLORES SENATE DECISION TO PASS NDAA 2017 WITHOUT ADDITIONAL AFGHAN VISAS

FISHER: “We are extremely disappointed that the Senate has failed to authorize additional visas for our Afghan allies in the National Defense Authorization Act. We urge Congress not to abandon those who risked their lives for our troops.”

New York, NY, JUNE 16, 2016 – The International Refugee Assistance Project at the Urban Justice Center (IRAP) is deeply disappointed in the Senate’s failure to include the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) passed on Tuesday. A bipartisan amendment to the bill, introduced by Senator Shaheen (D-NH) with the bipartisan support of Chairman McCain (R-AZ), Ranking Member Reed (D-RI) and Senator Tillis (R-NC), would have granted additional visas to Afghan interpreters and other essential allies to the United States, but was blocked from coming to a vote on the floor.

IRAP Policy Director, Betsy Fisher, added: “We are extremely disappointed that the Senate has failed to authorize additional visas for our Afghan allies in the National Defense Authorization Act. We urge Congress not to abandon those who risked their lives for our troops.”

The failure to extend the program may have dire consequences for Afghan allies and their families who are still waiting to be granted permission to resettle in the United States. Currently, over 10,000 Afghan interpreters and their families are waiting in life or death conditions for visas. As IRAP stated in a recent press release, without additional visas, “the United States will abandon thousands of Afghans who are targeted for their work with the United States.”

IRAP thanks Sens. Shaheen, McCain, Tillis, Reed, and others for their passionate efforts to save the program and will continue to work with them and other advocates to bring these men and women to safety.

Safe Passage. New Beginnings.
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