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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 137 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY D. WILLIAMS, KINSEY, SCHLOSSBERG, HILL-EVANS,  
N. NELSON, SANCHEZ, HERRIN, ISAACSON, FREEMAN, SAPPEY,  
HOHENSTEIN, STURLA, FITZGERALD, GILLEN, SCHWEYER, WEBSTER,  
MALAGARI AND MADDEN, SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

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A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the administrations of President Joseph Biden and  
2 Governor Tom Wolf to work together on resettlement efforts of  
3 Afghan refugees in Pennsylvania.

4 WHEREAS, Weeks before the scheduled withdrawal of American  
5 forces, the Taliban led a military campaign to retake control of  
6 Afghanistan; and

7 WHEREAS, Thousands of Afghan civilians attempted to flee the  
8 country after the fall of Afghanistan's capital Kabul; and

9 WHEREAS, Afghans and foreign nationals attempting to escape  
10 through Hamid Karzai International Airport were made to pass  
11 through Taliban checkpoints; and

12 WHEREAS, Scenes at the airport were chaotic; and

13 WHEREAS, Tens of thousands of Afghans risked their lives to  
14 help the United States military in Afghanistan; and

15 WHEREAS, United States military veterans are angry and  
16 frustrated that so many of their Afghan colleagues have been  
17 abandoned in Afghanistan; and

1       WHEREAS, Over 300,000 Afghan civilians were affiliated with  
2 the American mission in Afghanistan over the past two decades;  
3 and

4       WHEREAS, Of the 300,000 Afghan civilians who were affiliated  
5 with the American military, only a small portion qualified for  
6 refugee protection in the United States; and

7       WHEREAS, A top priority of the Federal government has been to  
8 evacuate the estimated 88,000 Afghans who directly aided the  
9 American military; and

10       WHEREAS, In his speech to the nation on August 16, 2021,  
11 President Joseph Biden stated there were plans to evacuate more  
12 Afghan families; and

13       WHEREAS, The Biden Administration prepared to temporarily  
14 relocate approximately 30,000 Afghans with special visas to two  
15 military installations in Texas and Wisconsin; and

16       WHEREAS, The Biden Administration negotiated with several  
17 countries in the Middle East and central Asia to temporarily  
18 host Afghans until they can be resettled in the United States;  
19 and

20       WHEREAS, Since August 14, 2021, over 105,000 people have been  
21 airlifted from Afghanistan; and

22       WHEREAS, As of August 25, 2021, more than 8,600 evacuees have  
23 arrived in the United States through Washington Dulles  
24 International Airport in Virginia; and

25       WHEREAS, The Philadelphia International Airport was the  
26 second airport in the nation to welcome Afghan refugees; and

27       WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has a long history of accepting  
28 refugees, including Anabaptists escaping religious persecution  
29 in the 1700s and Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s; and

30       WHEREAS, Today, Lancaster County is known as the country's

1 refugee capital due to resettlement efforts for individuals from  
2 conflict-ridden countries; and

3 WHEREAS, According to the United States State Department,  
4 Philadelphia and Pittsburgh are two of 25 cities that the  
5 Federal government plans to resettle Afghan special visa  
6 holders; and

7 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania should make it clear that it is ready,  
8 willing and able to accept Afghan refugees; and

9 WHEREAS, It would be unconscionable to permanently abandon  
10 Afghans who risked their lives to support the United States and  
11 our military; and

12 WHEREAS, Accepting Afghan refugees is a moral imperative;  
13 therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the  
15 administrations of President Joseph Biden and Governor Tom Wolf  
16 to work together on resettlement efforts of Afghan refugees in  
17 Pennsylvania; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to  
19 President Joseph Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, United  
20 States Secretary of State Antony Blinken, United States  
21 Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, United States  
22 Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, Pennsylvania Governor Tom  
23 Wolf and Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Acting  
24 Secretary Meg Snead.