



**One Hundred Seventeenth Congress  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515**

October 25, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to supplement our previous oversight inquiries regarding the administration's withdrawal process from Afghanistan. On August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, President Biden directed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to lead and coordinate Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) to evacuate and resettle Afghans in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Between July 2021 and January 2022, more than 79,000 Afghan evacuees were resettled to the United States as part of Operations Allies Refuge (OAR) and OAW.<sup>2</sup> According to a report from the DHS Office of Inspector General, DHS encountered obstacles screening, vetting, and inspecting Afghan evacuees arriving in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) lacked critical data to properly screen and vet evacuees and sometimes admitted or paroled insufficiently vetted evacuees into the United States. Due to this reporting, the committee seeks further information on behalf of the American people regarding the Department's involvement in OAR and OAW.

As the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism, I request that you preserve the following:

1. All documents, communications, and other records or data<sup>4</sup> pertaining to DHS's screening and vetting processes during OAR and OAW;
2. Any communications among the OAW Task Force, the Office of the Secretary of DHS, including the Deputy Secretary of DHS and employees therein, the Office of the Commissioner of CBP, and the DHS Volunteer Force pertaining to DHS's screening and vetting processes during the respective operations;

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<sup>1</sup> *Operation Allies Welcome*. DHS. <https://www.dhs.gov/allieswelcome>

<sup>2</sup> *DHS Encountered Obstacles to Screen, Vet, and Inspect All Evacuees during the Recent Afghanistan Crisis (Redacted)*. DHS OIG. <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2022-09/OIG-22-64-Sep22-Redacted.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> This request includes, but is not limited to, all emails, documents, and files created by and shared between and among these entities.

3. Any documents created or utilized by DHS to identify individuals who were subject to the screening and vetting process;
4. Any communications between DHS, Department of Defense (DOD), Department of State (DOS), and other relevant agencies pertaining to DHS's screening and vetting processes during OAR and OAW.

In ensuring compliance with this request, it is your responsibility to make sure that anyone who has contact with documents pertaining to OAR and OAW is aware of this preservation order, and that all documents, including all marking and notes, are preserved in their initial form.<sup>5</sup> Further, we request that you:

1. Exercise reasonable efforts to identify and notify former employees, contractors, subcontractors, and consultants, who have access to such electronic records that they are to be preserved;
2. Exercise reasonable efforts to identify, recover, and preserve all electronic records which have been deleted or marked for deletion but are still recoverable; and
3. If it is the routine practice of an agency employee or contractor to destroy or otherwise alter such electronic records, either halt such practices or arrange for the preservation of complete and accurate duplicates or copies of such records, suitable for production.

Thank you for your prompt attention to and compliance with this request. Should you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Adrienne Spero on the Committee staff at (202) 226-8417.

Sincerely,



AUGUST PFLUGER  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism

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<sup>5</sup> For our purposes, "preserve" means taking reasonable steps to prevent the partial or full destruction, alteration, testing, deletion, shredding, incineration, wiping, relocation, migration, theft, or mutation, of records in any form, as well as negligent handling that would make such records incomplete or inaccessible.