

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 21, 2021

## **VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

The Honorable Lloyd Austin II  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Austin:

I write to request an update from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) on the status of the care being provided to Afghan evacuees who are currently being housed on DoD installations across the United States, and any additional resources your Department might require.

As August drew to a close, American troops worked bravely to execute the critical non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO), lifting thousands of people out of Afghanistan in a matter of days. And as the continuing efforts to evacuate Americans and at-risk Afghans has shifted to the U.S. Department of State, DoD has shifted its role in the resettlement effort to providing housing, medical care and an initial home base for Afghan evacuees who are making their first point of contact in the U.S. at our military installations.

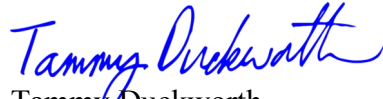
Now that these Afghan evacuees are safely arrived in the U.S., we must make sure we welcome them into our country by swiftly seeing to their immediate needs. Your Department continues to play a critical role in our whole of government response by providing critical care and lodging for these Afghans who are freshly arrived in the U.S. after enormous upheaval to their lives in Afghanistan, and I am eager to work to guarantee that folks are processed efficiently and safely.

Concerningly, I have heard anecdotal reports of strain to the system at some of these DoD locations that are now tasked with providing initial care, including issues accessing medical and dental care and sufficient access to culturally sensitive resources. Many members of the local community, including Veterans and even communities states away, stand ready and willing to donate their time, resources and expertise to help lighten the load and make sure these Afghans have what they need to start fresh in the United States.

Therefore, I request that you provide my staff with a briefing on the conditions across the DoD locations currently housing Afghan evacuees, to include further details on installations' capacity to provide medical and dental care, culturally sensitive resources and effectively distribute additional supplies to all these Afghans. I also invite you to communicate to me any additional measures of support that Congress may be able to provide, whether through funding, provision of other resources or making connections with community members who stand ready to provide any help they can.

Thank you for your continued dedication to this matter and for your willingness to work with me so that we can do what is necessary to welcome these Afghan evacuees and provide them the care and resources they need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Duckworth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator