

U.S. Rep. Tiffany: Statement on Biden administration plans to send Afghan nationals to Fort McCoy in Wisconsin

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WASHINGTON, DC – Rep. Tom Tiffany (WI-07) issued the following statement regarding the Biden administration’s stated plans to house an unspecified number of Afghans at Fort McCoy in Wisconsin:

“I am deeply disturbed by reports that as many as 5,000 Afghans per day are headed to the United States – many without valid visas or even basic identity documents. Biden administration officials have said they plan to transport many of these individuals to Fort McCoy in Wisconsin – but have declined to elaborate on how many will come, what screening will be carried out prior to arrival, or what will happen after they land here.”

“Alarming, the White House has also declined to say whether these individuals will be held in custody during vetting, or if we will see the same kind of catch-and-release policy we’ve seen on our southern border. Adding insult to injury, President Biden has not bothered to seek the approval of Wisconsin leaders, or the local communities that will be affected by this haphazard plan.”

“Even worse, the administration is reportedly calling for ‘volunteers’ from the Homeland Security Department to review and adjudicate visa applications – after the Afghans have already arrived on U.S. soil. This is incredibly disconcerting given that agencies like Customs and Border Protection are already overwhelmed by the crisis on the southern border – and that many ‘volunteers’ may lack sufficient experience in reviewing Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applications.”

“The White House should abandon this dangerous, ready-fire-aim plan and mitigate risk by transporting Afghans to safe third countries for vetting before bringing thousands of unknown people into Wisconsin or other U.S. states. Our national security has been deeply degraded in the months since January 20 and allowing the mass entry of foreigners from a known hotbed of terrorism will only make this situation far worse.”

“The SIV program itself has been under fire for its susceptibility to fraud. According to recent reports, more than 80 percent of Afghan SIV applications were rejected during the first three months of the year alone – long before the situation in Afghanistan collapsed into utter chaos. Trying to confirm the identities of arriving Afghans – let alone conducting proper background checks – with no functioning US embassy in Afghanistan will make this process even more complicated.”

“To be clear, I voted for legislation to expand, improve and accelerate the processing of visas for Afghans who assisted in the U.S. war effort earlier this year – something that most Americans support. While I would have preferred a safe third country option as part of that legislation, Democratic leaders in the House did not allow for consideration of any alternatives, amendments or improvements to what amounted to a take-it-or-leave it proposal.”

“The Biden administration has already allowed one catastrophe to unfold overseas, and the American people cannot afford for a similar catastrophe to unfold here. We cannot get this wrong. It is much more important to do this right than it is to do this fast.”