

**AMENDMENT TO THE RULES COMMITTEE PRINT  
OF HR 1960  
OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER OF OREGON**

Page 496, insert after line 24 the following (and conform the table of contents accordingly):

**1 SEC. 1218. IMPROVEMENT OF THE IRAQI SPECIAL IMMI-  
2 GRANT VISA PROGRAM.**

**3** The Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007 (8 U.S.C.  
**4** 1157 note) is amended—

**5** (1) in section 1242, by amending subsection (c)  
**6** to read as follows:

**7** “(c) IMPROVED APPLICATION PROCESS.—Not later  
**8** than 120 days after the date of the enactment of the Na-  
**9** tional Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014,”;

**10** (2) in section 1244, as amended by this Act, is  
**11** further amended—

**12** (A) by amending subsection (a) to read as  
**13** follows:

**14** “(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (c), the  
**15** Secretary of Homeland Security, or, notwithstanding any  
**16** other provision of law, the Secretary of State in consulta-  
**17** tion with the Secretary of Homeland Security, may pro-  
**18** vide an alien described in subsection (b) with the status

1 of a special immigrant under section 101(a)(27) of the Im-  
2 migration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 (a)(27)),  
3 and shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense,  
4 ensure efficiency by which applications for special immi-  
5 grant visas under section 1244(a) are processed so that  
6 all steps incidental to the issuance of such visas, including  
7 required screenings and background checks, are completed  
8 not later than 9 months after the date on which an eligible  
9 alien applies for such visa, if the alien—”.

10 (B) in subsection (b)—

11 (i) in paragraph (4) by adding at the  
12 end the following:

13 “(A) REVIEW PROCESS FOR DENIAL BY  
14 CHIEF OF MISSION.—

15 “(i) IN GENERAL.—An applicant who  
16 has been denied Chief of Mission approval  
17 required by subparagraph (A) shall—

18 “(I) receive a written decision;

19 and

20 “(II) be provided 120 days from  
21 the date of the decision to request re-  
22 opening of the decision to provide ad-  
23 ditional information, clarify existing  
24 information, or explain any unfavor-  
25 able information.

1                   “(ii) SENIOR COORDINATOR.—The  
2                   Secretary of State shall designate, in the  
3                   Embassy of the United States in Baghdad,  
4                   Iraq, a senior coordinator responsible for  
5                   overseeing the efficiency and integrity of  
6                   the processing of special immigrant visas  
7                   under this section, who shall be given—

8                                 “(I) sufficiently high security  
9                                 clearance to review Chief of Mission  
10                                denials in cases that appear to have  
11                                relied upon insufficient or incorrect  
12                                information; and

13                               “(II) responsibility for ensuring  
14                                that an applicant described in clause  
15                                (i) receives the information described  
16                                in clause (i)(I).”.

17                   (3) in section 1248, by adding at the end the  
18                   following:

19                   “(f) REPORT ON IMPROVEMENTS.—

20                               “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days  
21                                after the date of the enactment of the National De-  
22                                fense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, the  
23                                Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland  
24                                Security, in consultation with the Secretary of De-

1 fense, shall submit a report, with a classified annex,  
2 if necessary, to—

3 “(A) the Committee on the Judiciary of  
4 the Senate;

5 “(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations  
6 of the Senate;

7 “(C) the Committee on the Judiciary of  
8 the House of Representatives; and

9 “(D) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of  
10 the House of Representatives.

11 “(2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under  
12 paragraph (1) shall describe the implementation of  
13 improvements to the processing of applications for  
14 special immigrant visas under section 1244(a), in-  
15 cluding information relating to—

16 “(A) enhancing existing systems for con-  
17 ducting background and security checks of per-  
18 sons applying for special immigrant status,  
19 which shall—

20 “(i) support immigration security; and

21 “(ii) provide for the orderly processing  
22 of such applications without delay;

23 “(B) the financial, security, and personnel  
24 considerations and resources necessary to carry  
25 out this subtitle;

1           “(C) the number of aliens who have ap-  
2           plied for special immigrant visas under section  
3           1244 during each month of the preceding fiscal  
4           year;

5           “(D) the reasons for the failure to expedi-  
6           tiously process any applications that have been  
7           pending for longer than 9 months;

8           “(E) the total number of applications that  
9           are pending due to the failure—

10           “(i) to receive approval from the Chief  
11           of Mission;

12           “(ii) for U.S. Citizenship and Immi-  
13           gration Services to complete the adjudica-  
14           tion of the Form I-360;

15           “(iii) to conduct a visa interview; or

16           “(iv) to issue the visa to an eligible  
17           alien;

18           “(F) the average wait times for an appli-  
19           cant at each of the stages described in subpara-  
20           graph (E);

21           “(G) the number of denials or rejections at  
22           each of the stages described in subparagraph  
23           (E); and

24           “(H) a breakdown of reasons for denials at  
25           by the Chief of Mission based on the categories

1           already made available to denied special immi-  
2           grant visa applicants in the denial letter sent to  
3           them by the Chief of Mission.

4           “(g) PUBLIC QUARTERLY REPORTS.—Not later than  
5 120 days after the date of the enactment of the National  
6 Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, and  
7 every 3 months thereafter, the Secretary of State and the  
8 Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the  
9 Secretary of Defense, shall publish a report on the website  
10 of the Department of State that describes the efficiency  
11 improvements made in the process by which applications  
12 for special immigrant visas under section 1244(a) are  
13 processed, including information described in subpara-  
14 graphs (C) through (H) of subsection (f)(2).”.

15 **SEC. 1219. IMPROVEMENT OF THE AFGHAN SPECIAL IMMI-**  
16 **GRANT VISA PROGRAM.**

17           Section 602(b) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act  
18 of 2009 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) is amended—

19           (1) in paragraph (2)—

20           (A) in subparagraph (D)—

21           (i) by adding at the end the following:

22           “(ii) REVIEW PROCESS FOR DENIAL  
23 BY CHIEF OF MISSION.—

1                   “(I) IN GENERAL.—An applicant  
2 who has been denied Chief of Mission  
3 approval shall—

4                   “(aa) receive a written deci-  
5 sion; and

6                   “(bb) be provided 120 days  
7 from the date of receipt of such  
8 opinion to request reconsider-  
9 ation of the decision to provide  
10 additional information, clarify ex-  
11 isting information, or explain any  
12 unfavorable information.

13                   “(II) SENIOR COORDINATOR.—  
14 The Secretary of State shall des-  
15 ignate, in the Embassy of the United  
16 States in Kabul, Afghanistan, a senior  
17 coordinator responsible for overseeing  
18 the efficiency and integrity of the  
19 processing of special immigrant visas  
20 under this section, who shall be  
21 given—

22                   “(aa) sufficiently high secu-  
23 rity clearance to review Chief of  
24 Mission denials in cases that ap-  
25 pear to have relied upon insuffi-

1                   cient or incorrect information;  
2                   and

3                   “(bb) responsibility for en-  
4                   suring that an applicant de-  
5                   scribed in subclause (I) receives  
6                   the information described in sub-  
7                   clause (I)(aa).”;

8                   (2) in paragraph (4)—

9                   (A) in the heading, by striking “PROHIBI-  
10                  TION ON FEES” and inserting “APPLICATION  
11                  PROCESS”;

12                  (B) by striking “The Secretary” and in-  
13                  serting the following:

14                  “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120  
15                  days after the date of enactment of the Na-  
16                  tional Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal  
17                  Year 2014, the Secretary of State and the Sec-  
18                  retary of Homeland Security, in consultation  
19                  with the Secretary of Defense, shall improve the  
20                  efficiency by which applications for special im-  
21                  migrant visas under paragraph (1) are proc-  
22                  essed so that all steps incidental to the issuance  
23                  of such visas, including required screenings and  
24                  background checks, are completed not later



1           than 6 months after the date on which an eligi-  
2           ble alien applies for such visa.

3                   “(B) PROHIBITION ON FEES.—The Sec-  
4           retary”; and

5           (4) by adding at the end the following:

6                   “(12) REPORT ON IMPROVEMENTS.—Not later  
7           than 120 days after the date of the enactment of the  
8           National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year  
9           2014, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of  
10          Homeland Security, in consultation with the Sec-  
11          retary of Defense, shall submit to the appropriate  
12          committees of Congress a report, with a classified  
13          annex, if necessary, that describes the implementa-  
14          tion of improvements to the processing of applica-  
15          tions for special immigrant visas under this sub-  
16          section, including information relating to—

17                   “(A) enhancing existing systems for con-  
18           ducting background and security checks of per-  
19           sons applying for special immigrant status,  
20           which shall—

21                           “(i) support immigration security; and

22                           “(ii) provide for the orderly processing  
23           of such applications without delay;

1           “(B) the financial, security, and personnel  
2 considerations and resources necessary to carry  
3 out this section;

4           “(C) the number of aliens who have ap-  
5 plied for special immigrant visas under this  
6 subsection during each month of the preceding  
7 fiscal year;

8           “(D) the reasons for the failure to expedi-  
9 tiously process any applications that have been  
10 pending for longer than 9 months;

11           “(E) the total number of applications that  
12 are pending due to the failure—

13                 “(i) to receive approval from the Chief  
14 of Mission;

15                 “(ii) for U.S. Citizenship and Immi-  
16 gration Services to complete the adjudica-  
17 tion of the Form I-360;

18                 “(iii) to conduct a visa interview; or

19                 “(iv) to issue the visa to an eligible  
20 alien;

21           “(F) the average wait times for an appli-  
22 cant at each of the stages described in subpara-  
23 graph (E);

1           “(G) the number of denials or rejections at  
2           each of the stages described in subparagraph  
3           (E); and

4           “(H) a breakdown of reasons for denials  
5           by the Chief of Mission based on the categories  
6           already made available to denied special immi-  
7           grant visa applicants in the denial letter sent to  
8           them by the Chief of Mission.

9           “(13) PUBLIC QUARTERLY REPORTS.—Not  
10          later than 120 days after the date of the enactment  
11          of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal  
12          Year 2014, and every 3 months thereafter, the Sec-  
13          retary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Secu-  
14          rity, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense,  
15          shall publish a report on the website of the Depart-  
16          ment of State that describes the efficiency improve-  
17          ments made in the process by which applications for  
18          special immigrant visas under this subsection are  
19          processed, including information described in sub-  
20          paragraph (C) through (H) of paragraph (12).”.

21 **SEC. 1219. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

22          (b) PURPOSE.—Expressing the Sense of the House  
23          or Representatives that the Special Immigration Visa pro-  
24          grams authorized in the National Defense Authorization  
25          Act for Fiscal Year 2008 and the Afghan Allies Protection

1 Act of 2009 are critical to the U.S. national security, and  
2 that these programs must be reformed and extended in  
3 order to meet the Congressional intent with which they  
4 were created.

5 (b) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Congress created the Special Immigration  
7 Visa program for the purposes of protecting and aid-  
8 ing the many brave Iraqis and Afghans whose lives,  
9 and the lives of their families, were endangered as  
10 a result of their faithful and valuable service to the  
11 United States during Operations Enduring Freedom  
12 and Iraqi Freedom.

13 (2) The Iraq Special Immigrant Visa program  
14 is set to expire at the end of fiscal year 2013.

15 (3) The Afghanistan Special Immigrant Visa  
16 program is set to expire at the end of fiscal year  
17 2014.

18 (4) Despite the pending expiration of the Spe-  
19 cial Immigrant Visa programs, many brave Iraqis,  
20 Afghans, and their families, continue to face ongoing  
21 and serious threats as a result of their employment  
22 by or on behalf of the U.S. Government.

23 (5) Between FY08-FY12, only 22 percent of  
24 the available Iraqi SIVs (5,500 visas out of 25,000  
25 visas) have been issued and 12 percent of the avail-

1       able Afghan SIVs (1,051 visas out of 8,500 visas)  
2       have been issued.

3           (6) As the Washington Post reported in Octo-  
4       ber 2012, over 5,000 documentarily complete Af-  
5       ghan SIV applications remained in a backlog.

6           (7) The implementation of the Special Immigra-  
7       tion Visa programs has been protracted and ineffi-  
8       cient.

9           (8) The application and approval process for  
10       the Special Immigration Visa program is unneces-  
11       sarily opaque and difficult to navigate.

12          (9) Applicants in both Iraq and Afghanistan  
13       often have effusive recommendations from numerous  
14       military personnel, have served the U.S. war efforts  
15       for many years, and have served valiantly, in some  
16       instances literally taking a bullet for a U.S. service  
17       member, and yet are denied approval for a Special  
18       Immigration Visa with little to no transparency.

19          (10) Overly narrow provisions contained in the  
20       Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 leave many de-  
21       serving Afghans and their families in need of U.S.  
22       assistance, but unable to access the Special Immi-  
23       gration Visa program.

24          (11) The United States has a responsibility to  
25       follow through on its promise to protect those Iraqis

1 and Afghans who have risked their lives to aid our  
2 troops and protect America's security.

3 (12) The extension and reform of the Iraq and  
4 Afghanistan Special Immigrant Visa programs is a  
5 matter of national security.

6 (13) The extension and reform of the Afghan  
7 Special Immigrant Visa program is essential to the  
8 U.S. mission in Afghanistan.

9 (c) SENSE OF THE HOUSE.—It is the sense of the  
10 House of Representatives that the Iraq and Afghanistan  
11 Special Immigrant Visa programs should be—

12 (1) reformed by—

13 (A) ensuring applications are processed in  
14 a timely, and transparent fashion;

15 (B) providing parity between the two Spe-  
16 cial Immigrant Visa programs so that Afghan  
17 principal applicants, like Iraqi principal appli-  
18 cants, are able to include their spouse, children,  
19 siblings, and parents; and

20 (C) expanding eligibility for the Special  
21 Immigrant Visa programs to Afghan or Iraqi  
22 men and women employed by, or on behalf of,  
23 a media or nongovernmental organization  
24 headquartered in the United States, or an orga-  
25 nization or entity closely associated with the

1 United States mission in Iraq or Afghanistan  
2 that has received U.S. Government funding  
3 through an official and documented contract,  
4 award, grant, or cooperative agreement; and  
5 (2) extended in—

6 (A) Iraq through the year 2018, without  
7 authorizing any additional Special Immigrant  
8 Visas as authorized in the original statute; and

9 (B) Afghanistan through the year 2018,  
10 without authorizing any additional Special Im-  
11 migrant Visas as authorized in the original  
12 statute.

