



Legislation Text

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Clerk 08/30/2021

A MOTION requesting the executive convene a planning committee to support the resettlement of Afghan refugees and special immigrant visa holders in King County.

WHEREAS, in October 2001, the United States invaded Afghanistan in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al-Qaeda against the American people, and

WHEREAS, armed forces of the United States and its allies have been present in Afghanistan since October 2001, and

WHEREAS, members of the Afghan armed forces fought alongside the United States armed forces against the Taliban, and Afghan nationals worked to support the United States mission against the Taliban in Afghanistan as interpreters and in other supporting capacities, and

WHEREAS, the Taliban has defeated the Afghan armed forces and has taken control of Afghanistan, and

WHEREAS, United States President Joseph R. Biden has ordered the withdrawal of all United States armed forces personnel from Afghanistan by August 31, 2021, and

WHEREAS, thousands of Afghan nationals who aided the United States during its mission in Afghanistan are being evacuated by the United States as refugees or as special immigrant visa holders, and

WHEREAS, these evacuated Afghan nationals will need to be resettled in communities across the United States, and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Governor Daniel J. Evans, Washington state welcomed refugees

from Southeast Asia in the 1970s under similar circumstances, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 18653, in 2018, established the King County immigrant and refugee commission as a commitment to integrating, strengthening and valuing immigrant and refugee communities and upholding the county's commitment as a welcoming community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The council requests that the executive convene a planning committee to support the resettlement of Afghan refugees and special immigrant visa holders who have been vetted and approved for entry by the federal government and will be placed in King County.

B. The planning committee should include, but not be limited to, representatives from the following:

1. Executive office;
2. The office of equity and social justice;
3. The department of community and human services;
4. The King County immigrant and refugee commission;
5. Organizations that represent the Afghan-American community;

6. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Office of Refugee Settlement's state of Washington refugee coordinator and refugee health coordinator;

7. Organizations that will be responsible for coordinating the resettlement of Afghan refugees and special immigrant visa holders in King County; and

8. The King County Housing Authority.

C. The planning committee should be responsible for, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Determining the needs to support the organizations that are responsible for the resettlement of Afghan refugees and special immigrant visa holders to successfully resettle upon arrival and coordinating with private, public and nonprofit entities to ensure that the needs identified are met; and

2. Preparing a communications and outreach strategy to ensure Afghan refugees and special

immigrant visa holders understand the resources that are available to them and ensuring that the Afghan refugees and special immigrant visa holders have easy access to such resources.

D. The council also requests two briefings from the executive on the status of the planning committee's efforts and the status of the resettlement of Afghan refugees and special immigrant visa holders in King County. The briefings should be provided at the committee of the whole in January 2022 and in July 2022.