

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1601**

September 16, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

As members of the Republican Study Committee, we write to express our concerns that two weeks after the United States military withdrew from Afghanistan, U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents remain behind enemy lines and under Taliban control. The withdrawal of U.S. forces from evacuation efforts in Afghanistan to meet an arbitrary deadline has endangered U.S. national security and placed hundreds of American citizens and several thousand lawful permanent residents at the mercy of the Taliban.

Although we were pleased to learn that several U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents evacuated Afghanistan last week, it is unacceptable that any American citizen or lawful permanent resident wanting to leave Afghanistan be stranded under Taliban control. Now, as evacuation efforts in Afghanistan transition from the military to the State Department, your so-called “diplomatic mission” with a “cooperative” and “businesslike”<sup>1</sup> Taliban essentially means that securing the release of American citizens relies on a strategy of negotiation with and offering concessions to a terrorist organization with the blood of thousands of Americans on their hands.

We have serious concerns about negotiations with the Taliban leading to the payment of ransom – whether marketed as humanitarian assistance or sanctions relief – which will give the Taliban resources that could be used to attack the United States or our allies. The payment of ransom to terrorists, likely including the September 13 announcement of \$64 million dollars in humanitarian aid to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan provided without guardrails, will only further place Americans in harm’s way by incentivizing the Taliban, and other terrorist groups, to kidnap more Americans. The State Department still has not presented a plan before Congress illustrating how it will ensure that Americans will not be left behind through diplomatic negotiations.

As members of the Republican Study Committee, we are committed to holding accountable the decision makers who left Americans in danger. Therefore, we request that you answer the following questions:

- (1) Has the United States offered the unfreezing of assets of the former government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, or any sanctions relief, or financial assistance to the Taliban in exchange for providing the safe passage of American citizens or lawful permanent residents out of Afghanistan?
- (2) Have the Taliban requested the unfreezing of assets of the former government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, or any sanctions relief, or financial assistance, in exchange for providing the safe passage of American citizens or lawful permanent residents out of Afghanistan?

Finally, we request that the State Department provide copies of all documents and communications relating to diplomatic discussions of the unfreezing of former Afghan government assets, or the providing of sanctions relief to the Taliban within 10 days of receipt of this request. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Tracey Mann  
Member of Congress




Jim Banks  
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson  
Member of Congress



Troy Balderson  
Member of Congress



Patrick McHenry  
Member of Congress



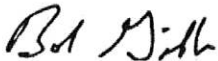
Dan Crenshaw  
Member of Congress



Bill Posey  
Member of Congress



Guy Reschenthaler  
Member of Congress



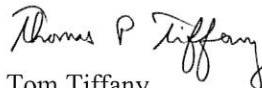
Bob Gibbs  
Member of Congress



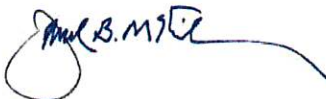
Michael Waltz  
Member of Congress



Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress



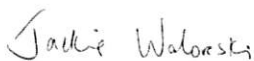
Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress



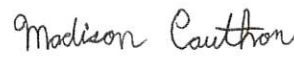
David McKinley  
Member of Congress



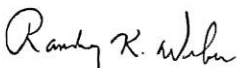
Chris Jacobs  
Member of Congress



Jackie Walorski  
Member of Congress



Madison Cawthorn  
Member of Congress



Randy Weber  
Member of Congress



Jim Hagedorn  
Member of Congress



Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.  
Member of Congress



Ronny Jackson  
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube  
Member of Congress