

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
The President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you today regarding the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan and the need to exercise increased congressional oversight on your Administration's handling of the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Given the serious implications of the withdrawal for our country's primary national security and foreign policy interests, we demand that your Administration provide frequent substantive briefings to Members of Congress and direct your officials to comply immediately with any and all hearing and casework requests.

Since the August 31st deadline for U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, Members of Congress have received little to no engagement from this Administration on classified briefings and updates on the situation in Afghanistan and ongoing efforts to evacuate our citizens and Afghan partners. While we appreciate Secretary of State Antony Blinken for appearing before the House and Senate this week, we fully recognize that his remarks were limited to Administration talking points and failed to fully answer our concerns.

We request that your Administration provide more frequent classified briefings for relevant congressional committees as our Afghanistan policy continues to evolve. Past briefings on Afghanistan for Congress have been dominated by presentations from Department officials that left little time for questioning or provided time-limited briefings in a closed setting at the unclassified level. Both approaches are equally unhelpful, and it leads to the kind of frustration expressed this week during House and Senate hearings.

Contrary to your repeated statements, the implementation of this withdrawal has been an unmitigated disaster. While we applaud the work of rank-and-file employees of the State Department and Department of Defense, the heroism of our armed forces deployed to assist evacuations, and the sacrifice of the 13 servicemembers who were killed by ISIS-K, it would not have been required in the first place had there been an informed and coherent strategy in place.

As you said previously, 'the buck stops here.' As long as Americans and our Afghan partners remain behind enemy lines and the Taliban continue to provide safe haven for terrorist organizations, Congress has a responsibility to hold your Administration accountable for your actions and demand compliance with all oversight requests made of the White House and relevant Departments.

We expect your immediate consideration of this request and urge the return of members of your administration to Congress to continue cooperating with our oversight responsibility.

Sincerely,

CC: The Honorable Antony J. Blinken

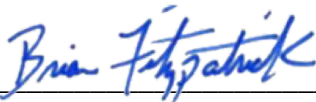
CC: The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III



Young Kim
Member of Congress



Steve Chabot
Member of Congress



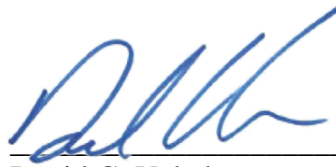
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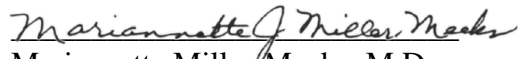
Lisa McClain
Member of Congress




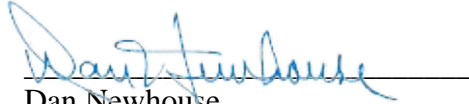
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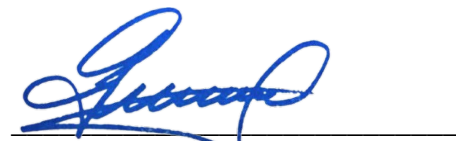

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