

UTILITY WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA

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Dear Employer / Local / Executive Board Member,

For the past 20 years, tens of thousands of Afghan men and women have worked alongside the U.S. military in Afghanistan to advance the cause of freedom, protect human rights, and seek justice for the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11th, 2001. Working as interpreters, logisticians, clerks, cultural advisors, drivers and security guards, these critical allies have supported our troops, saved American lives, and placed themselves in harm's way for our nation's benefit.

Now, however, as the United States withdraws from Afghanistan, these allies are in urgent and immediate danger. Attacks by the Taliban on Afghan nationals who supported the U.S. mission have increased, and these allies and their families' lives are at risk. The U.S. government, having promised to protect them, is now working to bring them to safety by granting priority access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and providing Special Immigrant Visas — a visa category created by Congress to ensure that no U.S. ally would be left in danger.

United States resettlement offices and affiliates welcome these Afghan families when they arrive in the United States. In support of this new American mission, our union's Department of Defense partners are asking for help in providing these allies with housing, employment opportunities, and other social services so that they can thrive in their new communities and place their families on solid pathways for new lives in America. In doing so, we seek to honor the service and sacrifices they have rendered our nation at great personal risk to themselves and their loved ones.

Accordingly, we call on all our friends and allies to stand with us in this mission, by assisting these newest arrivals to America. The UWUA is urging all our signatory employers / Locals / Executive Board members to play a role in reaching out to this newest of immigrant communities – people who have literally fought to defend our ideals – and to help identify opportunities to assist them in their moment of crisis.

At the UWUA we believe that, in the defense of one, we enable the defense of many. Our members, working in the electric, gas, water, and nuclear industries across the United States hail from backgrounds as diverse as the communities in which they live, with roots running to countries around the world. It is a fundamental principle of trade unionism that we stand up to fight for, and defend, the human dignity of those who cannot stand alone.

We are relentless in our interest in protecting the often-unseen people who make our nation great and make no distinction between those whose families have been in America for generations and those who are just arriving. Whether they are fleeing war, economic hardship, human rights persecution or simply seeking a better life for themselves and their families – like generations of immigrants before them - we are committed to assisting all people in finding and living the American Dream.

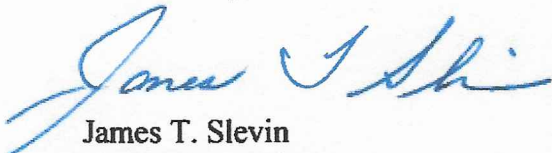
We fight every day for our members to enjoy a life of security, economic promise, and the choice to pursue life as they wish, not only for their own sake, but so that this prosperity and freedom can be shared with all who come to call our shores home.

As Americans we cannot, we must not, stand idly by if our actions could help to lift one more person, or one more family out of danger and into opportunity. Though a war may end chaotically, or without a perfect outcome, it does not mean that we should ever dishonor those who have valiantly served, whether from our nation or from others. It is our duty as citizens of America, and of the world, to take what actions we can to live up to the national ideals that have been defended by those now in need.

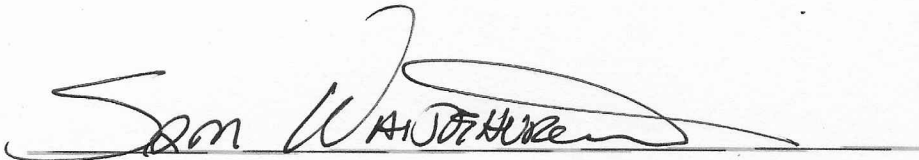
Together, we all inhabit communities and relationships that can come together in this pivotal historic moment to provide some assistance for those who stood shoulder to shoulder with our United States military heroes and, together, we now have an opportunity to make a difference in their lives.

In closing, we again ask all our Employers / Locals / Executive Board members to explore opportunities where they exist. Hiring, training, sponsoring, or supporting even just a few of these brave individuals or their family members will not only change lives, it will save lives. If you feel your organization is in a position to assist in this effort in any way, please contact our Director of Veterans Affairs and Workforce Development, Richard Passarelli at Rpassarelli@uwua.net with any questions or opportunities that you believe may be available.

In Solidarity,



James T. Slevin
National President
Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO (UWUA)



Colonel Sam Whitehurst, Vice President, Programs & Services
Retired, U.S. Army
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