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## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STEWART).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
December 2, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRIS STEWART to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

### SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISA PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of our responsibilities in this Congress is to protect the men and women from Iraq and Afghanistan who put their lives on the line to assist the United States.

Thousands of Afghans and Iraqis who helped us as guides, as interpreters, must not be left to the tender mercies of al Qaeda, the Taliban, and others

with long memories who seek to punish those who helped us.

Yesterday's Wall Street Journal had a front-page story about an Iraqi family that is caught in the bureaucratic pipeline for the families seeking safety after years of service and now facing intense threats against them.

There was a recent HBO feature by comedian John Oliver on his program, "Last Week Tonight," that, in graphic, satirical, somewhat profane terms, captured the essence of the bureaucratic nightmare faced by thousands in Iraq and Afghanistan. They and their family members are at risk of being assaulted, kidnapped, tortured, raped, or killed simply because they were there helping Americans.

We are seeing some progress. I deeply appreciate the tireless efforts of Chairman BUCK McKEON, Ranking Member ADAM SMITH, and their staff, the work on the National Defense Authorization Act, which will help us uphold commitments to our Afghan allies.

However, all of us in Congress have a responsibility, and there is an opportunity for all of us to step up and help this desperate situation. Over the last 7 years, it has been a battle to have America honor its obligations by effectively implementing this Special Immigrant Visa program authorized by Congress to help those who helped us to escape.

We are seeing the results of many on this floor who encourage the State Department to more aggressively implement this Special Immigration Visa program. The Afghan program went from an embarrassing 32 visas for all of 2012 to an average of 400 each month this year. This is due to enhanced oversight and pressure and cooperation from Congress. The program is now functioning at a level that almost allows us to keep our promises to our allies.

One thing we all can do is to join me and my colleague, ADAM KINZINGER,

who has been a tireless champion for justice for these Afghan and Iraqi nationals, in directing a letter to our friends on the Appropriations Committee asking that they, like last year, authorize urgently needed Afghan SIVs in the end-of-the-year appropriations package that we will soon have here on the floor.

We have stepped up before, but we need to avoid this Special Immigrant Visa roulette so that these people are not in limbo, or, worse, resigned to the hell inflicted on them by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Even with the leadership of the Armed Services Committee, we will still fall short of upholding our commitments for a need as great as 9,000 visas for Afghanistan alone. That is why our appropriators must help shoulder the responsibility, and they need to hear from us, every Member of Congress.

It is our moral obligation to take action to protect, not just those people, but the security interests of the United States. It is not just their innocent lives that are at stake. Think about the trust that is going to be necessary when we need help in the future from foreign nationals for our soldiers, our diplomats, and our aid workers.

Let's sign the letter. Let's all detail someone on every staff to pay attention to this issue. Add our voices. It is being done by the Armed Services Committee. Help the Appropriations Committee in this next critical step.

It should not be left to a comedian like John Oliver, God bless him, to carry this banner alone. Sign the letter, speak out, take up the cause.

We must not fail those who are at risk only because they believed our promises and they helped Americans in some of the most difficult circumstances we have ever asked our soldiers, diplomats, and aid workers to face.

This is a failure we can avoid, and we can end this Congress on a positive

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g.,  1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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