

## United States Senate

November 9, 2021

Dear Governors:

On October 26, 2021, during a closed briefing before the United States Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) regarding the screening and vetting of noncitizens recently evacuated from Afghanistan, briefers from the Biden administration shared that mandatory security and vetting measures set by Congress are not uniformly implemented to ensure the safety of our homeland. At this briefing, which had a strict “members-only, classified” designation that kept the information hidden from the public, it was also revealed that all of the information disclosed within the briefing was considered to be at the unclassified level. There’s no excuse for this and I joined my Republican colleagues on HSGAC to request Senate Democrats hold a public hearing on the issue. It’s clear that the Biden administration is trying its hardest to keep this information from the American people, including our governors and other elected leaders. What happened in Afghanistan was horrible, and this administration is making things worse by not properly communicating with state and local leaders around the country while unvetted refugees continue to be resettled across the country.

Biden administration officials have disclosed to HSGAC committee staff that the vetting process for Afghan evacuees has been insufficient and inadequate – putting American families across the country at risk. Given this troubling news, it is critical that local leaders, starting with our nation’s governors, be immediately notified of any individuals being resettled in their state. I am gravely concerned that this is not the case. Of course, this wouldn’t be the first time the federal government has tried to keep governors in the dark. I was Governor of Florida during the Syrian refugee crisis and the Obama administration refused to tell us when and where they were resettling refugees in my state. The administration flew refugees in during the middle of the night and hoped we wouldn’t notice. We know this is again happening under President Biden. Recently, we learned that Biden’s disastrous open border and amnesty policies have secretly brought 70 flights of illegal immigrants into my state of Florida – yet the president hasn’t said a word to our governors, congressional delegation or law enforcement about who is coming in. The lies and secrecy are astounding.

As leaders of our states, I implore you to demand that President Biden order his administration to keep you fully informed on all resettlement operations and refugees

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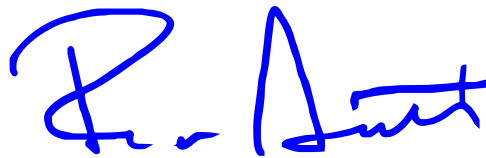
vetting intelligence before anyone is relocated into your communities. Helping refugees is foundational to our values as Americans, but we must ensure that we have appropriate background information about those seeking safe harbor in our country and that our national security agencies do not allow for gaps in security or intelligence sharing to put American lives at risk. Ensuring all safety protocols and national security measures are followed should be the top priority of the Biden administration, and they must treat the safety of Americans everywhere as their number one priority.

It is outrageous that nearly three months after President Biden's botched withdrawal from Afghanistan that killed 13 service members, we do not have a full account of all the Americans who he left behind, or a full account of the Afghans who were evacuated to the United States. We must address the lack of transparency regarding this evacuation and resettlement operation and demand Department of Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas and President Biden be straightforward with the American people.

As a former governor, I understand the challenges you face and it is my goal to use my position in the U.S. Senate to be a partner to you in Washington. Clear communication from the Biden administration regarding the resettlement of Afghan evacuees to your communities is critical to the safety of your states. If you are not receiving this information, please let me know.

We must continue to make sure this administration is serving the best interests of American families, and hold them accountable for any failure to uphold that responsibility. I greatly appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Rick Scott  
United States Senator