

February 21, 2025

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President, Members of Congress, Secretary Hegseth, and Secretary Rubio,

The American Translators Association (ATA) is the largest professional association of interpreters and translators in the United States, with over 8,000 members who work in over 90 languages. In 2021, ATA [addressed letters](#) to the Biden administration urging officials to swiftly evacuate the Afghan interpreters who aided American forces in the region, as the U.S. had promised. It is a promise that remains unkept.

We now strongly urge the Trump administration to prioritize support for Afghans who provided critical interpreting services to the United States, as well as their families. These individuals played an essential role in supporting American military and diplomatic efforts, often at great personal risk, and they and their families now face increased displacement, hardship, and the threat of violence and retribution. As a nation that values the contributions of those who serve alongside our troops, we must ensure these courageous individuals are not left behind.

Recent actions related to immigration have significantly impacted Afghan refugees by limiting their legal options and cutting funding for those who have recently arrived in the U.S., making it difficult for them to access essential services like housing, employment assistance, and legal support. These decisions have left many Afghan refugees facing significant barriers to moving forward and rebuilding their lives in the U.S., despite the numerous sacrifices they have made for this country.

In addition to addressing the immediate needs of Afghan refugees, we also wish to underscore the continuing, crucial role that all interpreters play in our society. From the border to our hospitals and from the courts to schools and government services, interpreters provide essential expertise and contribute to efficiency in all sectors. Qualified interpreters and translators not only aid individuals facing serious barriers to education, healthcare, legal rights, and public safety, but they also support all levels of government in all branches, from the federal court interpreter, who helps victims of violence testify at trial to bring their attackers to justice, to the U.S. Department of State's staff interpreters, who help the president communicate and negotiate with foreign officials.

We call upon Congress and the Trump administration to keep the U.S.'s promise to Afghan interpreters by restoring support for their resettlement and to strengthen policies and funding that ensure the availability of professional interpreters and translators across all sectors. This is essential to upholding our nation's values.

We trust that you will act swiftly to uphold America's commitment to those who have supported us and to the continued need for access to language services for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Geoffrey S. Koby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Dr. Geoffrey S. Koby
President, American Translators Association