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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. DUNCAN of Tennessee).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
July 24, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN J. DUNCAN, Jr. 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.

### AFGHAN SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISAS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to urge—indeed, to plead—with my colleagues to cosponsor bipartisan legislation that Representative KINZINGER and I will be introducing this afternoon, which would authorize 1,000 additional special immigrant visas to allow the United States to bring our Afghan allies to safety here in America. Earlier this week,

Senators MCCAIN and SHAHEEN introduced identical legislation in the other body.

The need for this bill is urgent. Indeed, Congress should have acted yesterday. That is because the State Department has confirmed now that they have completely run out of the visas we authorized in December. In a way, that is good news.

Remember how in previous years the State and other agencies never remotely came close to using the visas that were authorized, which consigned these poor souls to the seventh circle of bureaucratic hell. Processing was so slow and abysmal that only 32 of our Afghan allies received a visa in 2012. People were left in limbo—or worse—while the Taliban hunted them down, kidnapped their siblings, murdered their parents—capturing them, torturing, beheading them.

But the administration responded to the demand from Congress for significant reform in the program, and the agency has aggressively attacked the visa-eligible backlog. Despite the processing—on average, 400 visas each month since January—years of a failed system means that, today, there remains an astonishing 6,340 brave men and women waiting in limbo.

If Congress does not act before we adjourn for the August recess, it means we will be slamming the door to safety for hundreds of our Afghan allies and their families. With each day that passes, these are people whose lives and those of their families are left to the tender mercies of the Taliban—seeking revenge.

Mr. Speaker, Representative KINZINGER and I have a nonpartisan, fully paid-for bill—House leadership willing—that could pass on the floor in the blink of an eye. All we have to do—what we must do—is choose to make it a priority. Remember, we have done this before. Reforms that enabled the program to work passed as an amend-

ment to the National Defense Authorization Act on this floor by, I found, an inspiring 420–3 margin. Passing this bill is not only the right thing to do for these poor souls, it is in our own national security interest.

As Secretary Kerry pointed out in urging Congress to grant more visas, “The way a country winds down a war in a faraway place and stands by those who risk their own safety to help us in the fight sends a powerful message to the world that is not soon forgotten.”

Whether or not you supported the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, what matters now is where we stand in keeping our commitments. This bill, authorizing an additional 1,000 visas for the balance of this current fiscal year, is a Band-Aid—but a critical one. We are going to have to act again in the coming months to deal with fiscal year 2015, starting in October.

For too long, it was the State and other agencies that failed to make this the priority it needed to be. Now that they have upped the attention, the focus, the resources, and the commitment, let’s not let Congress be the obstacle. Innocent lives are at stake. American honor is on the line.

I urge my colleagues to do everything they can in the coming days to bring this bill to the floor. It is our duty to save the lives of those who risked so much to help us when we needed them.

### HELPING FAMILIES IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ACT

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this week, the largest ever study of schizophrenia reported that the condition is tied to more than 100 genes.

□ 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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