

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

April 8, 2025

10:19 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Ted Eischeid, Chair  
Representative Andrew Gray  
Representative Carolyn Hall  
Representative Zack Fields  
Representative Dan Saddler  
Representative Jamie Allard  
Representative David Nelson

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

Encouraging the United States Congress to award Hmong veterans of the Vietnam War the Congressional Gold Medal.

- MOVED SJR 10 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13

Urging the President of the United States to expand evacuation efforts for applicants with approved Special Immigrant Visas, including resumption of evacuation flights organized by the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts; urging the United States Department of State to secure legal protections and humanitarian assistance for Special Immigrant Visa applicants; and requesting that the United States Secretary of State provide a report to Congress regarding efforts to reinstate evacuation flights for applicants with approved Special Immigrant Visas.

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SJR 10

SHORT TITLE: HMONG VETERANS; CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) WIELECHOWSKI

02/20/25           (S)           READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS

02/20/25 (S) STA  
02/25/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
02/25/25 (S) Heard & Held  
02/25/25 (S) MINUTE(STA)  
03/04/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
03/04/25 (S) Moved SJR 10 Out of Committee  
03/04/25 (S) MINUTE(STA)  
03/05/25 (S) STA RPT 5DP  
03/05/25 (S) DP: KAWASAKI, WIELECHOWSKI, GRAY-  
JACKSON, BJORKMAN, YUNDT  
03/17/25 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)  
03/17/25 (S) VERSION: SJR 10  
03/21/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
03/21/25 (H) MLV  
04/01/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124  
04/01/25 (H) Heard & Held  
04/01/25 (H) MINUTE(MLV)  
04/03/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124  
04/03/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --  
04/08/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HJR 13

SHORT TITLE: AFGHANS, SP. IMMIGRANT VISAS, ASSISTANCE  
SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) STAPP

03/21/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
03/21/25 (H) MLV  
04/08/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE WILL STAPP  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HJR 13 to the committee.

HENRY THOMPSON, Staff  
Representative Will Stapp  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** On behalf of Representative Stapp, prime sponsor, presented HJR 13 to the committee.

JOE SABOE, Founder  
Team America Relief  
Denver, Colorado

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of HJR 13.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[10:19:25 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 10:19 a.m. Representatives Gray, Nelson, Allard, Hall, Saddler, Fields and Eischeid were present at the call to order.

**SJR 10-HMONG VETERANS; CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL**

[10:20:43 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID announced that the first order of business would be SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10, Encouraging the United States Congress to award Hmong veterans of the Vietnam War the Congressional Gold Medal.

[10:20:52 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID opened public testimony on SJR 10. After ascertaining that there was no one who wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[10:21:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON urged the committee's support of SJR 10.

[10:22:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER echoed Representative Nelson's support of SJR 10 and emphasized the importance of Hmong veterans and their service to United States.

[10:22:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD thanked Representative Nelson for his office's work in bringing SJR 10 forward.

[10:23:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY moved to report SJR 10 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

There being no objection, SJR 10 was reported from the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

[10:24:00 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 10:24 a.m. to 10:26 a.m.

**HJR 13-AFGHANS, SP. IMMIGRANT VISAS, ASSISTANCE**

[10:26:17 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13, Urging the President of the United States to expand evacuation efforts for applicants with approved Special Immigrant Visas, including resumption of evacuation flights organized by the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts; urging the United States Department of State to secure legal protections and humanitarian assistance for Special Immigrant Visa applicants; and requesting that the United States Secretary of State provide a report to Congress regarding efforts to reinstate evacuation flights for applicants with approved Special Immigrant Visas.

[10:27:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILL STAPP, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HJR 13 to the committee. He read from the sponsor statement for HJR 13 [included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

After the September 11, 2001 attacks on our nation, the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) on October 7, 2001. The primary purpose of the mission was to address the issue of Al-Qaeda influence in Afghanistan. During OEF, Afghani nationals assisted our US servicemembers as translators and interpreters throughout their mission. The acts of these Afghani nationals provided necessary communication and understanding of cultural norms. In 2006, the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program was established as part of the Afghan Allies Protection Act and was expanded in 2008 to include Iraqi nationals who assisted in the same capacity in Iraq under Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). This program allowed those who assisted us to apply and gain permanent US residency. Since the botched evacuation of US forces in Afghanistan in 2021, processing and approval of these SIV's and the

subsequent evacuation of these Afghani nationals and their families have been delayed or stalled. HJR 13 aims to rectify this by respectfully urging the President of the United States to order the US Secretary of State to resume, expand, and expedite the processing of these SIV applications and the evacuations of these individuals and their families. These Afghani citizens risked their lives and the lives of their families under Taliban rule to assist our servicemembers during Operation Enduring Freedom, on the promise that their service could be repaid with a chance at permanent US residency. We must honor our promises as a nation and do our best to assist these allies.

[10:30:58 AM](#)

HENRY THOMPSON, Staff, Representative Will Stapp, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Stapp, prime sponsor, presented HJR 13 to the committee. He explained how the Defense Authorization Act of 2006 allowed for up to 50 translators from Iraq or Afghanistan to receive special immigrant visas to the United States. He emphasized the importance of their work and qualities they possess to become U.S. citizens.

[10:32:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked Representative Stapp to recite some of the legislative actions that the United States Congress has taken to realize the promises that were made to U.S. allies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

REPRESENTATIVE STAPP referred to Public Law 242 and Public Law 11036, both of which concerned special immigrant visas for Iraqi and Afghan translators working with the U.S. armed forces.

[10:34:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY asked Representative Stapp if he would be amenable to an amendment that would allow for Iraqi and Afghan refugees to bring their families to the U.S. with them.

REPRESENTATIVE STAPP said that he would be open to amending the proposed legislation.

[10:37:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked how HJR 13 might help to improve U.S. relations in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

REPRESENTATIVE STAPP said, "What's right is right and what's wrong is wrong," and he emphasized the importance of taking corrective action in the name of doing the right thing.

[10:39:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD commented that she doesn't want to see the proposed legislation "killed" by an amendment that would include Iraqi and Afghan refugees to bring their families to the U.S. with them.

[10:40:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HALL asked a clarifying question with regards to page 3, lines 5, 9, and 14.

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY clarified that the legislation would cover a series of different types of refugee statuses in Alaska.

[10:41:52 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY shared that he had had communications with the refugee coordinator for Alaska.

[10:44:36 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID commented that he was "very pleased" to see the resolution before the committee.

[10:45:31 AM](#)

JOE SABOE, Founder, Team America Relief, gave invited testimony in support of HJR 13. He began his testimony by sharing his time serving the U.S. Army in Iraq with Representative Stapp and shared his ashamedness at the way that Iraqi veterans living in the U.S. were being treated by the U.S. Government. He emphasized the importance of special immigration visas and their impact on both the U.S. and Alaska. He explained the importance of expediting special immigration visas for Iraqi and Afghan collaborators.

[10:50:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HALL thanked Representative Stapp for his work on HJR 13.

[10:51:27 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID announced that HJR 13 would be held over.

[10:51:49 AM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.