August 19, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States of America  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State  
Harry S. Truman Building, C Street Lobby  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear President Biden and Secretary Blinken:

New York has always been committed to being an inclusive and welcoming state for immigrants and refugees. While the situation in Afghanistan unfolds, we write to you as elected officials from New York State saying we will welcome asylum seekers and refugees from Afghanistan and stand ready to support them when they are here. We also encourage you to act urgently to make sure that those still on the ground who are at risk and eligible for protection pathways are evacuated expeditiously.

There are fantastic organizations doing resettlement work across the state that can provide them with the assistance and services they need. These agencies have been instrumental during the past year in the support of thousands of refugee families living in New York with heightened needs of healthcare, education, employment, technological support, and translation/interpretation services. Our state is among the best equipped to take in and support these families.

In 2017, as a response to the previous administration's withdrawal from these vital programs, New York stepped up and created the New York State Enhanced Services to Refugees Program (NYSESRP). This program has served as a model for other states. We are well equipped to tackle these challenges through the NYSESRP. With additional federal aid to New York, to support the estimated 30,000 eligible refugees needing to be evacuated from Afghanistan, our State can help your administration quickly address this crisis and save lives.

As the Biden Administration and Department of State continue to address these pressing issues, we hope you will consider New York as a new home for those who have assisted our efforts overseas for the past twenty years and who deserve the safety our country can provide.
Sincerely,

Andrew Gounardes  
New York State Senator, District 22

Catalina Cruz  
New York State Assemblymember, District 39

Brian Barnwell  
New York State Assemblymember, District 30

Chris Burdick  
New York State Assemblymember, District 93

Brian A. Benjamin  
New York State Senator, District 30

Kenneth Burgos  
New York State Assemblymember, District 85

Alessandra Biaggi  
New York State Senator, District 34

Robert Carroll  
New York State Assemblymember, District 40

Neil D. Breslin  
New York State Senator, District 44

Sarah Clark  
New York State Assemblymember, District 136

Samra Brouk  
New York State Senator, District 55

Jeremy A. Cooney  
New York State Senator, District 56

Inez E. Dickens  
New York State Assemblymember, District 70
Jeffrey Dinowitz
New York State Assemblymember, District 81

Patricia Fahy
New York State Assemblymember, District 109

Nathalia Fernandez
New York State Assemblymember, District 80

Mathylde Frontus
New York State Assemblymember, District 46

James F. Gaughran
New York State Senator, District 5

Michael Gianaris, Deputy Majority Leader
New York State Senator, District 12

Deborah Glick
New York State Assemblymember, District 66

Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas
New York State Assemblymember, District 34

Richard N. Gottfried
New York State Assemblymember, District 75

Michelle Hinchey
New York State Senator, District 46

Brad Hoylman
New York State Senator, District 27

Robert Jackson
New York State Senator, District 31

Jonathan G. Jacobson
New York State Assemblymember, District 104

Kimberly Jean-Pierre
New York State Assemblymember, District 11