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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Kabul, Afghanistan fell to the advancing Taliban forces on August 15, 2021; and

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WHEREAS, In scenes eerily reminiscent of the fall of Saigon in 1975, U.S. forces were forced to evacuate the U.S. Embassy in Kabul by helicopter, echoing and amplifying a dark moment in American history; and

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WHEREAS, As these images unfolded, Americans from all walks of life watched in horror as the U.S. flag at the embassy was furled and embassy personnel fled from hostile combatants, as scenes of chaos and confusion deluged the international airport in Kabul, as young men plunged to their deaths after vainly attempting to latch themselves to departing evacuation planes, and as desperate parents pressed their children into the hands of U.S. service members, even at the price of separation, to ensure that their children had the chance to grow up free; and

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WHEREAS, A terrorist bomb attack at the Kabul airport killed at least 169 Afghan civilians on August 26, 2021, including Sayed Obaidullah Amin, an Afghan interpreter who served alongside U.S. troops; countless others were wounded; and

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1 WHEREAS, Eighteen U.S. service members were wounded in
2 this attack, and an additional thirteen U.S. service members
3 made the ultimate sacrifice, dying in the line of duty; and

4 WHEREAS, These brave men and women gave their lives to
5 defend their fellow Americans and to uphold the U.S. flag and
6 everything for which it stands; and

7 WHEREAS, August 26, 2021 was the deadliest day for the
8 U.S. military in Afghanistan since 2011; and

9 WHEREAS, The U.S. government abandoned allies, ignored or
10 neglected actionable intelligence, and sent contradictory
11 signals in the face of the rapid Taliban advance; it was
12 unprepared to evacuate U.S. citizens, allies, and the Afghan
13 citizens who served alongside U.S. troops or to safeguard the
14 U.S. troops guarding the airport in Kabul; and

15 WHEREAS, The Afghan allies of the U.S. paid a heavy price;
16 Afghan forces remained in the field until the withdrawal of
17 U.S. air support; 66,000 Afghan soldiers and policemen were
18 killed fighting side by side with or under the direction of the
19 international coalition led by the U.S.; more than 47,000
20 Afghan civilians were killed throughout the conflict; and

1 WHEREAS, The U.S. government abandoned the defensible and
2 geopolitically important Bagram Air Field prior to the
3 evacuation of U.S. citizens, allies, and fleeing Afghans; and

4 WHEREAS, Contrary to the American military ethos of
5 leaving no man behind, the U.S. government has abandoned an
6 unknown number of U.S. citizens, Afghan interpreters, and
7 others who served directly alongside U.S. troops in
8 Afghanistan; many were unable to escape prior to the final
9 withdrawal of U.S. troops, leaving behind not only men but
10 also women and children who will bear the brunt of the
11 Taliban's repressive policies; and

12 WHEREAS, Upon announcing that the last U.S. troops had
13 left Kabul, Marine Corps General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr.,
14 Commander of U.S. Central Command, stated that some U.S.
15 citizens who wanted to leave Afghanistan had been left behind;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Media sources have reported instances of innocent
18 civilians and Afghan allies being raped, tortured, and
19 executed by the Taliban and of Taliban fighters forcing young
20 women and girls into so-called marriages; and

21 WHEREAS, The handling of the troop withdrawal by the U.S.
22 has been widely panned and referred to as a total disaster,

1 egregiously mishandled, and flawed; and

2 WHEREAS, America's NATO allies have roundly and sharply
3 criticized the handling of the drawdown and the current
4 administration's go it alone approach; and

5 WHEREAS, American leadership apparently disregarded the
6 appeals and calls of the leaders of the allied nations that
7 have stood with the U.S. throughout two decades in Afghanistan
8 during the critical moments prior to and following the fall of
9 Kabul; and

10 WHEREAS, The chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan undercut
11 the global credibility of the U.S., its ability to inspire
12 fear in its enemies, and its standing among its friends and
13 allies while empowering its enemies at the expense of its
14 friends; and

15 WHEREAS, The pullout of U.S. troops from Afghanistan and
16 the collapse of a friendly government to a hostile insurgency
17 weakens America's defense and security posture in Central Asia
18 and the Indian subcontinent; and

19 WHEREAS, Al-Qaeda and other militant groups, such as the
20 so-called Islamic State, currently operate in Afghanistan and
21 may, once again, use it as a base to train and launch terror

1 attacks against the U.S. and its allies; and

2 WHEREAS, Media reports indicate that the Taliban and its
3 allies now possess tens of billions of dollars' worth of
4 military gear and weapons that were manufactured in the U.S.,
5 including Blackhawk helicopters, drones, night-vision goggles,
6 and military vehicles that were seized following the American
7 withdrawal; and

8 WHEREAS, For many veterans, particularly those who served
9 in Afghanistan, the chilling images have reawakened old wounds
10 and unearthed buried memories, causing them to question the
11 purpose of their sacrifices; and

12 WHEREAS, Over the past weeks, many of these veterans have
13 made phone calls, sent emails, and done everything in their
14 power to facilitate the evacuation of Afghan friends and
15 colleagues with whom they had served; and

16 WHEREAS, More than 2,400 U.S. service members died serving
17 their country in Afghanistan, and countless others returned
18 maimed and injured, forever changed by their wartime
19 experiences; and

20 WHEREAS, Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are
21 universal and unalienable rights shared by men and women

1 across the globe, regardless of ethnicity, religion, or
2 culture; and

3 WHEREAS, Under the Taliban, Afghans, especially Afghan
4 women, will lose many of the rights and freedoms they achieved
5 under the former government; as the promise of freedom has
6 receded, it has been replaced by the dim reality of
7 oppression; and

8 WHEREAS, To escape danger and to seek freedom and a better
9 life, many of the Afghan allies of the U.S. have fled their
10 homes, seeking refuge in the U.S. and other allied countries;
11 therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
13 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we honor the memory of
14 all U.S. service members killed in Afghanistan, including the
15 thirteen who died on August 26, 2021 who were Marine Corps
16 Lance Cpl. David L. Espinoza, Marine Corps Sgt. Nicole L. Gee,
17 Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Darin T. Hoover, Army Staff Sgt. Ryan
18 C. Knauss, Marine Corps Cpl. Hunter Lopez, Marine Corps Lance
19 Cpl. Rylee J. McCollum, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Dylan R.
20 Merola, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Kareem M. Nikoui, Marine Corps
21 Sgt. Johanny Rosario Pichardo, Marine Corps Cpl. Humberto A.
22 Sanchez, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Jared M. Schmitz, Navy
23 Hospitalman Maxton W. Soviak, and Marine Corps Cpl. Daegan W.

1 Page, and we extend our sincere condolences to their families;
2 and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That we extend our gratitude to all the men and
4 women of the U.S. Armed Forces who served in Afghanistan to let
5 them know that, even in these dark days for our country and for
6 Afghanistan, their sacrifices have not been forgotten; and be
7 it further

8 RESOLVED, That we urge the federal government to secure
9 the safety and evacuation of any U.S. citizens still remaining
10 in Afghanistan; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That we urge the federal government to work with
12 international, state, and local governments to assist
13 displaced Afghan allies to resettle in safe communities,
14 either in the U.S. or in other, allied nations; and be it
15 further

16 RESOLVED, That, as the American people expect
17 accountability from their leadership, we urge the federal
18 government to somberly evaluate the failures of U.S.
19 leadership that led to this grim denouement of Operation
20 Enduring Freedom, to stand boldly against totalitarian regimes
21 emboldened by this perceived American weakness, and to once
22 again take up America's historic position as the leader of the

1 free world and as a beacon of liberty across the globe.