

# Wicker, Hyde-Smith & colleagues demand answers from Biden on Afghanistan withdrawal

*Twenty-Six Senators Seek Information on Americans & Allies Left Behind in Wake of Hasty U.S. Withdrawal*  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senators Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) and Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.) today joined colleagues in demanding information from President Biden regarding the humanitarian crisis created by his withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan.

The Mississippi Senators are among 26 lawmakers who signed a letter, which requests specific information on Americans and allies left behind in Afghanistan and on the vetting process for evacuees being brought to the United States.

“The signatories of this letter may have differing opinions about whether the United States should have maintained a military presence in Afghanistan, but we all agree that the arbitrary and poorly-planned method by which you withdrew from Afghanistan caused this crisis,” the Senators wrote.

“We request thorough, unclassified answers to these questions that can be made available to the general public. Americans need to see that the United States will not abandon them to terrorists abroad forever,” the Sen-

ators said.

U.S. Senator Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) led the letter, which was also signed by Senators Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), John Boozman (R-Ark.), Mike Braun (R-Ind.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Steve Daines (R-Mont.), Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), Deb Fischer (R-Neb.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Bill Hagerty (R-Tenn.), Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), John Kennedy (R-La.), Mike Lee (R-Utah), Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.), Roger Marshall (R-Kan.), Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), Ben Sasse (R-Neb.), John Thune (R-N.D.), Pat Toomey (R-Pa.), and Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.).

Read the letter below.  
*President Joseph R. Biden  
 The White House  
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue,  
 N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20500*

*Dear President Biden:*

*We write regarding the humanitarian crisis created by your withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan, and the safety and well-being of our fellow countrymen and allies who you left behind. The signatories of this letter may have differing opinions about whether the*

*United States should have maintained a military presence in Afghanistan, but we all agree that the arbitrary and poorly-planned method by which you withdrew from Afghanistan caused this crisis.*

*You say that more than 123,000 individuals have been evacuated from Afghanistan in recent weeks (nearly half of whom were evacuated by groups or countries other than the United States), but only an estimated 5,500 “self-identified” American citizens (4.5% of the total evacuees) were evacuated or left on their own. Further, while it does not appear that you have released exact numbers of our Afghan partners who were evacuated, your administration has publicly confirmed that fewer than 50% of evacuated Afghans were Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants or their families.*

*Our immediate priority is the safety and well-being of American citizens, permanent residents, and allies who were left behind in Afghanistan. We are also concerned by reports that ineligible individuals, including Afghans with ties to terrorist organizations or serious, violent criminals, were evacuated alongside innocent refugee families. We request*

*that you provide answers to the following questions no later than 5:00PM on Tuesday, September 7:*

*1. How many American citizens does the administration believe to remain in Afghanistan?*

*a. Of the American citizens still in Afghanistan, how many are currently in contact with the State Department?*

*b. Of the American citizens still in Afghanistan, how many have expressed a desire to be repatriated to the United States?*

*c. How did the administration reach this estimate, and what steps is the administration taking to find and connect with Americans who may still be in Afghanistan but who are not in contact with the State Department?*

*2. How many green-card holders does the administration believe to remain in Afghanistan?*

*a. Of the green-card holders still in Afghanistan, how many are currently in contact with the State Department?*

*b. Of the green card holders still in Afghanistan, how many have expressed a desire to be repatriated to the United States?*

*c. How did the administration reach this estimate, and what efforts is the administration taking to find and connect with green-card holders who may still be in Afghanistan but who are not in contact with the State Department?*

*3. How many Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants remain in Afghanistan?*

*a. Of the SIVs remaining in Afghanistan, how many have already received final SIV approval from the U.S. Center for Immigration Services?*

*b. Of the SIVs remaining in Afghanistan, how many are currently in contact with the State Department?*

*c. Of the approved SIVs and the SIV applicants who were evacuated, how many served*

*for a year or more as interpreters or translators for American or allied armed forces in Afghanistan?*

*d. Are the State Department and USCIS still processing pending SIV applications? What steps are being taken to ensure that pending applicants are safe from Taliban reprisals as their applications are adjudicated?*

*4. According to your administration, more than 50% of evacuated Afghans were not SIV applicants or their families, including vulnerable Afghans such as women and girls at high risk for Taliban reprisals. Of the more than 57,000 Afghans who are not American citizens, green-card holders, or SIV applicants or their families, how many had no pending immigration application or status with the United States prior to being airlifted?*

*a. By what criteria did your administration select these individuals for the airlift while leaving American citizens, green-card holders, and SIV applicants and their families behind?*

*b. How many evacuees, in total, are Afghans who are not American citizens, green-card holders, or SIV applicants or their families? Please also provide a breakdown of how many of these individuals are adult men, adult women, girls, or boys.*

*c. What steps did your administration take to verify the identities of these individuals before evacuation?*

*d. What steps are your administration taking to ensure that individuals are thoroughly vetted and their identities verified before entering the United States?*

*e. Who is responsible for vetting these evacuated individuals before they reach the United States?*

*f. Is the administration checking for potential criminal records and national-security concerns before admitting individuals to the United States?*

*g. There are reports that a convicted rapist—who had previously served a prison sentence in the United States before being deported—was flown to the national capital region as part of this airlift operation. Was that individual vetted before being flown to the United States?*

*If so, was his criminal record found and ignored, or was it not found in the first place?*

*h. How many other individuals have been allowed to enter the United States as part of this evacuation before undergoing vetting and background checks?*

*We request thorough, unclassified answers to these questions that can be made available to the general public. Americans need to see that the United States will not abandon them to terrorists abroad forever. If your answers implicate classified material, you may also submit a classified appendix to your answers and coordinate with us to provide a classified briefing.*

*We look forward to your prompt response.*

*Sincerely,*

## \*Circuit

(Continued from page 1.)

#19-0053, State of Mississippi vs. Byrekus Washington, Ct. I and II aggravated assault; case #2017-0110, Terry Dixon, et al vs. Garius Winston, et al; case 21-0004, State of Mississippi vs. Ayquanya Brown, Ct. I and II aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer, State of Mississippi vs. Jamie Pernell, Ct. I aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer; case #21-0005, State of Mississippi vs. Larry Horton, aggravated assault.

On Thursday, October 7, case to be heard are: case #2019-0012, Charles E. Young, et al vs. CMS Management, LLC and John Does I-IV.

On Friday, October 8, case to be heard is: case #21-0024, State of Mississippi vs. Jocquiez Williams, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

On Monday, October 11, case to be heard is: case #20-0046, State of Mississippi vs. Curtis Williams, armed robbery.

On Tuesday, October 12, drug court will be held.

On Wednesday, October 13, cases to be heard are: case #21-0020, State of Mississippi vs. Jennifer Nicole Brady, possession of a controlled substance, State of Mississippi vs. Julie Flint, possession of a controlled substance.

On Thursday, October 14 thru Monday, October 18, open.

On Tuesday, October 19, drug court will be held.

On Wednesday, October 20 and Thursday, October 21, open.

On Friday, October 22, there will be arraignments.

## Mississippi fire agency's leader accused of embezzlement

LAUREL, Miss. (AP) — The former president of a Mississippi county's fire council is accused of embezzling money from the agency.

Jones County Sheriff's Department deputies arrested William Lee Garrick, 42, of Laurel, Mississippi, on one count of embezzlement on Tuesday, WDAM-TV reported. Garrick is being held in the Jones County jail. No bond has been set. It was unclear whether he had an attorney who could speak on his behalf.

Garrick led the Jones County Fire Council and is also the former chief of the Calhoun Volunteer Fire Department.

“We’re still trying to wrap our heads around the fact that this has happened,”

said Dana Bumgardner, the public information officer for the Fire Council. “It’s unconscionable to us and it has hurt us as individuals because, you know, he was trusted... It’s unthinkable that something like this could happen for funds that are just meant for the good of the community.”

He’s accused of taking several thousands of dollars from an account that’s used to fund volunteer fire departments that serve Jones County. An exact amount of money embezzled has not yet been released.

Bumgardner said the Fire Council is in the process of reorganizing and replacing the former officers with new officers “and taking steps to make certain this never happens again.”

Stay connected to your community by subscribing to the



Sign-up Online Anytime • 24/7

www.holmescountyherald.com

PayPal is Available!

