

United States Senate

January 13, 2022

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary
Department of Treasury
Washington, DC 20220

Secretary Blinken and Secretary Yellen,

We write to express significant concerns over the recent announcement from the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control's (OFAC) on the issuance of General Licenses (GLs) authorizing the flow of U.S. taxpayer dollars through the Taliban and the Haqqani network. While we agree widespread famine and denial of rights to Afghan women and girls are immediate problems to address with humanitarian aid and assistance, OFAC's sweeping authorization risks too much U.S. taxpayer money flowing through the Taliban or the Haqqani network to fund an excessive, ill-fated, or wasteful list of services such as activities to support the rule of law by the Taliban, education exchanges in a country that now devalues education for women and girls, and endangered species research. Furthermore, OFAC does not outline control mechanisms to ensure funds do not end up in the Taliban's coffers. As these licenses stand, the Administration's wide latitude and unclear enforcement mechanisms risk the American taxpayer funding the world's most dangerous foreign terrorist organization.

Financial sanctions against the Taliban and Haqqani network have endured for over two decades across five presidential administrations, beginning with President Bill Clinton's 1999 Executive Order 13129 prohibiting transactions with the Taliban due to their status as a state sponsor of terrorism. The relationship between the Taliban and Al-Qaeda largely mirrors the days leading up to September 11, but today both are claiming victory over the United States, growing their ranks through the release of prisoners and record new recruitment, and are sitting on a trove of captured and abandoned American weapons. Beyond security concerns, Taliban leaders are targeting women for beatings and killings and banning their free movement around the country.

We call on this administration to stand by its promise to not remove financial sanctions against the Taliban unless they changed their governing policies, denied safe harbor to terrorists, and guaranteed the fundamental human rights of Afghan women and girls. Clearly, they have not met those conditions. Yet, OFAC's licenses grant the Taliban and Haqqani network wide latitude to collect "payment of taxes, fees, or import duties, or the purchase or receipt of permits, licenses, or public utility services" on U.S. taxpayer dollars. This makes it far too easy for the Taliban and Haqqani network to steal taxpayer money intended for humanitarian assistance.

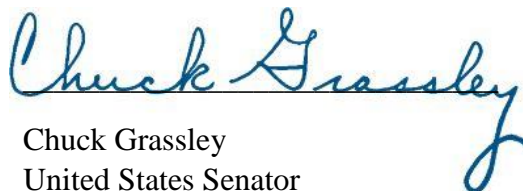
To this end, we request detailed information on how you will prevent U.S.-provided humanitarian aid funds from being diverted to support the malign activities of two organizations the U.S. has labeled Specially Designated Global Terrorist organizations. Please provide a detailed response providing the information requested below no later than February 11, 2022.

1. A listing of total funds provided by the U.S. to each GL issued by OFAC related to humanitarian assistance, other support, and trade with Afghanistan.
2. The total amount and percentage of funds collected by the Taliban and Haqqani network in the form of a tax, fee, or import duty.
3. The total humanitarian aid funding the U.S. has sent Afghanistan since August 31, 2021.


Sincerely,



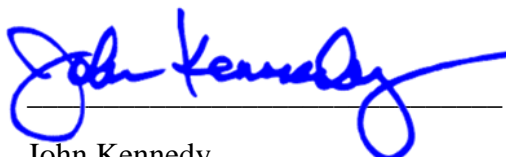
Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



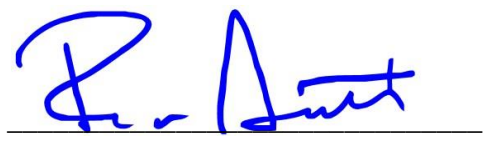
John Kennedy
United States Senator



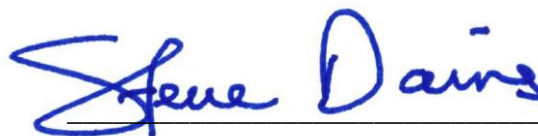
Marco Rubio
United States Senator




Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



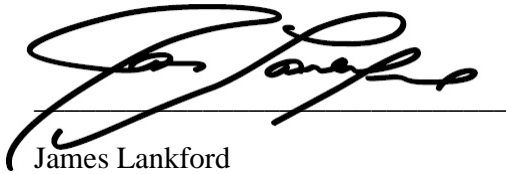
Steve Daines
United States Senator



Cynthia Lummis
United States Senator



John Barrasso
United States Senator



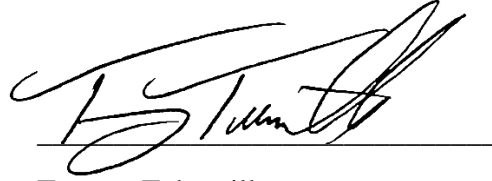
James Lankford
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator