To provide for special immigrant status for Syrian Kurds and other Syrians who partnered with the United States Government in Syria, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Crow introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ____________________

A BILL

To provide for special immigrant status for Syrian Kurds and other Syrians who partnered with the United States Government in Syria, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Syrian Partner Protection Act”.

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SEC. 2. SPECIAL IMMIGRANT STATUS FOR CERTAIN SYRIAN KURDS AND OTHER SYRIANS WHO WORKED FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IN SYRIA.

(a) In General.—Subject to subsection (c)(1), and notwithstanding any other provision of law, for purposes of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.), the Secretary of Homeland Security may provide an alien described in subsection (b) with the status of a special immigrant under section 101(a)(27) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)) if—

(1) the alien, or an agent acting on behalf of the alien, submits a petition to the Secretary under section 204 of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1154) for classification under section 203(b)(4) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(b)(4));

(2) the alien is otherwise eligible to receive an immigrant visa; and

(3) the alien is otherwise admissible to the United States for permanent residence (excluding the grounds for inadmissibility specified in section 212(a)(4) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(4))).

(b) Aliens Described.—

(1) In General.—An alien described in this subsection—
(A)(i) is a citizen or national of Syria or a stateless person who has habitually resided in Syria;

(ii) has partnered with, was employed by, or worked for or directly with the United States Government in Syria as an interpreter, translator, intelligence analyst, or in another sensitive and trusted capacity, on or after January 1, 2014, for an aggregate period of not less than 1 year; and

(iii) provided service to the United States’ efforts against the Islamic State, which has been documented in a positive recommendation or evaluation; or

(B)(i) is the spouse or child of a principal alien described in subparagraph (A); and

(ii)(I) is following or accompanying to join the principal alien in the United States; or

(II) due to the death of the principal alien, a petition to follow or accompany to joint the principal alien in the United States—

(aa) was revoked, terminated, or otherwise rendered null; and

(bb) would have been approved if the principal alien had survived.
(2) EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS.—An application by a surviving spouse or a child of a principal alien shall be subject to the employment requirements set forth in paragraph (1)(A)—

(A) as of the date on which the principal alien first filed an application for special immigrant status; or

(B) if no such application has been filed, the employment requirements as of the date on which the principal alien died.

(c) MEMBERSHIP IN CERTAIN SYRIAN ORGANIZATIONS.—An applicant for admission to the United States under this section may not be deemed inadmissible based on membership in, participation in, or support provided to, the Syrian Democratic Forces or other partner organizations as determined by the Secretary of Defense.

(d) NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided under this subsection, the total number of principal aliens who may be provided special immigrant status under this section may not exceed 4,000 in any of the 5 fiscal years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) EXCLUSION FROM NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS.—Aliens provided special immigrant status
under this section shall not be counted against any numerical limitation under section 201(d), 202(a), or 203(b)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1151(d), 1152(a), and 1153(b)(4)).

(3) **CARRY FORWARD.**—If the numerical limitation set forth in paragraph (1) is not reached during a fiscal year, the numerical limitation under such paragraph for the following fiscal year shall be increased by a number equal to the difference between—

(A) the number of visas authorized under paragraph (1) for such fiscal year; and

(B) the number of principal aliens provided special immigrant status under this section during such fiscal year.

(e) **VISA AND PASSPORT ISSUANCE AND FEES.**—An alien described in subsection (b) may not be charged any fee in connection with an application for, or the issuance of, a special immigrant visa under this section. The Secretary of State shall ensure that aliens who are issued a special immigrant visa under this section are provided with an appropriate passport necessary for admission to the United States.

(f) **PROTECTION OF ALIENS.**—The Secretary of State, in consultation with other relevant Federal agen-
cies, shall provide an alien described in subsection (b) who
is applying for a special immigrant visa with protection
or the immediate removal from Syria or other nearby
countries if the Secretary determines that such alien is
in imminent danger.

(g) APPLICATION PROCESS.—

(1) REPRESENTATION.—An alien applying for
admission to the United States as a special immi-
grant under this section may be represented during
the application process, including at relevant inter-
views and examinations, by an attorney or other ac-
credited representative. Such representation shall
not be at the expense of the United States Govern-
ment.

(2) COMPLETION.—The Secretary of State and
the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation
with the Secretary of Defense, shall ensure that ap-
lications for special immigrant visas under this sec-
tion are processed in such a manner to ensure that
all steps under the control of the respective depart-
ments incidental to the issuance of such visas, in-
cluding required screenings and background checks,
are completed not later than 9 months after the date
on which an eligible alien submits all required mate-
rials to apply for such visa.
(3) Rule of Construction.—Notwithstanding paragraph (2), any Secretary referred to in paragraph (2) may take longer than 9 months to complete the steps incidental to issuing a visa under this section if the Secretary, or the designee of the Secretary—

(A) determines that the satisfaction of national security concerns requires additional time; and

(B) notifies the applicant of such determination.

(4) Appeal.—An alien whose petition for status as a special immigrant is rejected or revoked—

(A) shall receive a written decision that provides, to the maximum extent feasible, information describing the basis for the denial, including the facts and inferences underlying the individual determination; and

(B) shall be provided not more than 1 written appeal per rejection or denial, which—

(i) shall be submitted not more than 120 days after the date on which the applicant receives a decision pursuant to subparagraph (A);
(ii) may request the reopening of such
decision; and

(iii) shall provide additional informa-
tion, clarify existing information, or ex-
plain any unfavorable information.

(h) Eligibility for Other Immigrant Classi-

fication.—An alien may not be denied the opportunity
to apply for admission under this section solely because
such alien qualifies as an immediate relative of a national
of the United States or is eligible for admission to the
United States under any other immigrant classification.

(i) RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT.—An alien who is
granted special immigrant status under this section shall
be eligible for the same resettlement assistance, entitle-
ment programs, and other benefits as is available to refu-
gees admitted under section 207 of the Immigration and

(j) Authority to Carry Out Administrative

Measures.—The Secretary of Homeland Security and
the Secretary of State shall implement any additional ad-
ministrative measures as they consider necessary and ap-
propriate—

(1) to ensure the prompt processing of applica-
tions under this section;
(2) to preserve the integrity of the program established under this section; and

(3) to protect the national security interests of the United States related to such program.

(k) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall promulgate regulations to carry out this section, including establishing requirements for background checks.

SEC. 3. SPECIAL IMMIGRANT STATUS REPORTING REQUIREMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Inspector General of the Department of State shall submit an annual report described in subsection (b), no later than January 30 of each year, with a classified annex if necessary, to—

(1) the Committee on Judiciary, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Judiciary, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under subsection (a) shall evaluate the implementation of the Syrian special immigrant status program under section 2, including, for the previous calendar year—
(1) the number of petitions filed;

(2) the number of petitions—

(A) pending adjudication;

(B) pending visa interview; and

(C) pending security checks;

(3) the number of petitions that were denied;

(4) the number of cases that have exceeded the mandated processing time and relevant case numbers; and

(5) an accounting of any obstacles discovered that would hinder effective implementation of the program.

(e) Consultation.—In preparing the report under subsection (a), the Inspector General shall consult with—

(1) the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Visa Office;

(2) the Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs, Executive Office;

(3) the United States embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, Consular Section;

(4) the United States embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, Consular Section;

(5) the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services;
(6) the Department of Defense; and

(7) nongovernmental organizations providing legal aid in the special immigrant visa application process.

(d) PUBLICATION.—The non-classified portion of the report described in this section shall be published on the website of the Department of State.