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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3303
February 26, 2018

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
The Capitol, H-405
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking, Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
The Capitol, H-405
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madame Chairwoman and Ranking Member Visclosky,

As you may know, the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee's FY 2018 bill would remove the "notwithstanding clause" from the Leahy Law. DOD has used the "notwithstanding" loophole to continue funding Afghan security forces implicated in gross human rights violations, including the rape of children. As you work with the Senate to finalize the FY2018 bill, I respectfully urge you to accept their language to remove this loophole.

Mr. John Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) raised this issue in a recently declassified report titled "Child Sexual Assault in Afghanistan: Implementation of the Leahy Laws and Reports of Assault by Afghan Security Forces." The report documents that DOD has used the notwithstanding clause to exempt the Afghanistan Security Forces from the Leahy Law.

Congress has allocated billions of dollars to the Afghanistan Security Forces over the years, and yet these human rights abuses appear to be continuing. We, as the stewards of the American taxpayers' money, must not be a party to funding those who are committing these heinous acts against children. Again, I respectfully urge you to accept the Senate Defense Appropriations language to close this legal loophole. It is time to right this wrong. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress

Cc: Senator Thad Cochran; Senator Patrick Leahy