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New Findings About Displaced Communities Released by APM Research Lab and McCourtney Institute for Democracy

**Survey results reveal insights about Americans' willingness to help Afghan refugees and U.S. victims of
extreme weather**

ST. PAUL, Minn., Nov. 16, 2021— The [APM Research Lab](#) from American Public Media (APM) and the [McCourtney Institute for Democracy](#) from Penn State have [released new findings](#) from the Oct. 2021 Mood of the Nation Poll revealing insights about Americans' willingness to help two distinct groups of displaced communities – Afghan refugees and U.S. residents impacted by extreme weather.

The McCourtney Institute for Democracy regularly conducts the nationally representative Mood of the Nation Poll to gauge how Americans are feeling about various aspects of American politics and society. Following the final withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan on August 31, 2021, and after months of floods, hurricanes and wildfires, their most recent poll included several questions about how Americans' think and feel about helping communities displaced by these current events. The APM Research Lab has taken a detailed look at the answers to these questions.

“A strong majority and similar proportion of Americans indicate that the U.S. should help Afghans who helped U.S. troops and that the U.S. should help Americans who lost their homes in recent floods, hurricanes and wildfires,” says Eric Plutzer, PhD, Director of Polling, McCourtney Institute for Democracy.

The questions and subsequent analysis are centered around three core areas related to each displaced group:

- 1.) The U.S. should provide help to the displaced community.
- 2.) Local charities and organizations should provide help to the displaced community.
- 3.) The person surveyed would take action (donate/volunteer) to help the displaced community.

Major takeaways:

- A strong majority and virtually identical proportion of American adults indicate support for the statement that the U.S. should help Afghans who helped U.S. troops (83%) as well as the statement that the U.S. should help Americans who lost their homes in recent floods, hurricanes and wildfires (81%).
- When asked whether they would support the efforts of charitable and religious organizations to resettle the displaced groups in “your local community” support diverges somewhat:
 - An even higher proportion of Americans, 93%, supports such assistance for fellow Americans displaced by extreme weather, perhaps indicating a preference among some for support from non-governmental sectors over “the U.S.” government.

- A somewhat smaller majority, 76%, supports resettlement of Afghan refugees in their local communities.
 - Follow-up questions reveal that many support helping the two displaced groups out of a sense of charity or, in the case of Afghan refugees, a sense of obligation and fulfilling promises made by U.S. forces.
 - Many among the minority who would be opposed to efforts to resettle Afghan refugees gave reasons that indicated a desire to solve domestic problems prior to helping foreign nationals, or discomfort with introducing a different cultural background to their local area.
 - In addition, responses vary by political affiliation, with 90% of Democrats indicating support for local settlement of Afghan refugees compared to 61% of Republicans.
- Over two-thirds of Americans indicate that they would be willing to personally contribute to the efforts of charities and religious organizations working to resettle Afghan refugees in their local communities.
- Even more—four-fifths—of Americans indicate that they would be willing to volunteer time or donate their resources to efforts to bring displaced Americans to their local communities.
- Over 60% of most demographic groups included in our analysis would contribute to efforts of charities and religious organizations working to settle Afghan refugees in their local area; 75% or more of nearly all groups would support such work on behalf of Americans displaced by fire and floods.

In examining the reasons for supporting local resettlement efforts for Afghan refugees, two themes emerged. Many expressed universal values of charity, but many more felt a strong sense of obligation and debt to Afghans who put their lives in danger by assisting U.S. troops and officials as translators, drivers, etc. For example, respondents gave answers such as:

“They helped us in the war so we can at least help them.” – 40-year-old male respondent from Louisiana.

“They are refugees and they are allies as they were America’s help overseas. Now they need help and America should be their help.” – 24-year-old female respondent from Michigan

“It’s clear that helping people impacted by the events and tragedies of the last year is a largely bipartisan issue for most Americans,” says APM Research Lab Managing Partner Craig Helmstetter. “However, in the differences of opinion we see on these issues, demographically, the largest divide is along political lines.”

For complete survey findings and methods, including transparency disclosures required by the American Association for Public Opinion Research, CNN, and the Roper Center, [click here](#).

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About the APM Research Lab

The APM Research Lab is a division of American Public Media aimed at informing the public by producing credible research- and analysis-based content. The Research Lab conducts research projects of all types — surveys, demographic analyses, literature reviews and more — and informs the work of partner organizations and the broader public through traditional reports, as well as infographics, blog posts, interactives, presentations and other platforms. For more information, visit apmresearchlab.org.

About the McCourtney Institute for Democracy

The McCourtney Institute for Democracy at Penn State promotes scholarship and practical innovations that defend and advance democracy in the United States and abroad. Through teaching, research and public outreach, the Institute leverages the resources of Penn State and partners around the world to foster a model of deliberation, policymaking and responsiveness that is passionate, informed and civil. For more information, visit democracy.psu.edu.

Media Contact: Elle Lyons, mediarelations@mpr.org, 651.290.1163