

**Congressman Greg Stanton**  
**Judiciary Committee**  
**Member Day Hearing**  
**November 3, 2023**

Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member Nadler, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about my priorities and concerns as a representative to Arizona's 4<sup>th</sup> District. I was fortunate to serve on this Committee my first two terms in Congress and I am grateful for the opportunity to return to discuss some important issues.

I would like to touch on a range of topics, but my underlying message is that Arizonans deserve to live in safe communities. Specifically, I want to call attention to:

- Immigration and Border Security,
- Radiation exposure impacting constituents in my state,
- Tools that law enforcement need to keep us safe,
- Easing Afghan resettlement, and
- Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People

**Immigration and Border Security**

One of my top priorities is reforming our broken immigration system. Congress has an urgent duty to ensure an orderly, humane and secure Southern border and to protect Americans from illicit fentanyl and other deadly drugs that come through our ports of entry.

There are bipartisan, common-sense solutions we can employ here. We can deliver more support to local governments and communities, including through adequate support for the Shelter and Services Program, which provides funding for the many NGOs and faith-based organizations near border communities that provide refuge to migrants who have nowhere to go upon being released from federal custody.

We can reduce unauthorized arrivals at the southern border by creating new legal pathways, including legislating additional visa categories to support industries facing historic labor shortages. We can strengthen our economic competitiveness by increasing the number of available H-1B visas. I also support expanding refugee pathways and in-country processing, so that migrants are not forced to make the dangerous journey to the U.S. border.

We also have an obligation to provide safety and security to our Dreamers—young people brought to this country as children who are as American as my own kids. They did not make the choice to come to this country, and they have been left in legal limbo for far too long. I encourage this committee to take up the bipartisan American Dream and Promise Act would allow Dreamers to apply for permanent legal status.

I stand ready to work with this committee on bipartisan, common-sense reforms that will help our border communities across Arizona and the country.

**Downwinders Parity Act**

Another one of my top priorities is to help the Downwinders in my state. “Downwinders” is a term for people who were “downwind” of radioactive pollution from more than 200 weapons tests done in Arizona between 1945 and 1962. This radiation resulted in cancers and other serious diseases for those living in the polluted areas. While Congress attempted to make amends in 1990 by passing the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA)—affected individuals in Mohave County, Arizona and Clark County, Nevada were excluded from the program for *no logical scientific reason*.

Counties to the south and the east of Clark and Mohave were included, while Clark and Mohave were carved up. This is not acceptable. This radiation spread and impacted the health and wellbeing of residents in ineligible areas. My bill, H.R. 4754, *the Downwinders Parity Act*, would extend downwinder eligibility to those who were present in lower Clark County and lower Mohave County during a period of atmospheric testing at the Nevada Test Site. These Americans deserve justice for their illnesses caused by their own government’s atomic testing, and we are running out of time.

### **Law Enforcement Innovate to De-Escalate Act**

In 2022, over 1200 people—1142 civilians and 59 officers—lost their lives in gun-related incidents between law enforcement and the public. Law enforcement officers deserve access to tools that will keep themselves and our families safe.

Modern advancements in security technologies, like Conducted Energy Weapons—commonly known as Tasers—have become essential less-than-lethal tools for law enforcement to de-escalate violent encounters. Unfortunately, the development of more effective and efficient less-than-lethal weapons is obstructed by antiquated definitions in the Gun Control Act of 1968. For example, even if a projectile weapon like a Taser does not carry a substantial likelihood of death or serious injury—but uses an explosive propellant—it is still classified as a “firearm”. This classification may result in the use of the weapon being considered “deadly force”—an unintended consequence of a law passed before modern less-than-lethal weapons could be envisioned.

My bipartisan bill with Rep. Scott Fitzgerald of Wisconsin, H.R. 3269, *the Law Enforcement Innovate to De-Escalate Act*, would make the technical fix needed to allow law enforcement to access more less-than-lethal devices.

Our law enforcement officers must have the tools they need to protect themselves and others. We must explore every opportunity to make encounters safer for officers and community members alike.

### **Afghan Adjustment Act**

We also need to make sure we are extending asylum to those who truly need it. In the weeks before Kabul fell, my team and I worked to help evacuate women who served in the Afghan National Army’s Female Tactical Platoon (FTP). These FTPs were combat soldiers who were recruited, rigorously vetted, and trained by elite U.S. strike forces. These courageous women served alongside our U.S. forces and risked their lives by going where male soldiers could not. They conducted two thousand missions including high-risk and highly classified missions.

Their work to support our mission and their gender makes them and their families a top target for the Taliban. Yet of the women from this unit who are now here on humanitarian parole in the United States, we have only heard of half of these brave women being granted asylum.

These women put their lives and their families lives on the line to assist the United States and yet their futures remain uncertain. We owe our allies protection, legal status, and stability. I urge this committee to quickly take up the Afghan Adjustment Act to give these FTPs and thousands of others certainty and stability.

### **Missing and Murdered Indigenous People**

Lastly, I want to highlight one of the most important issues facing my state of Arizona: Missing and Murdered Indigenous People. Arizona has the third highest number of missing and murdered indigenous people in the country. It is a national shame that such violence has been perpetuated against Native communities, especially Native women, and we have not done enough as federal partners to address it. This committee is in a unique position to move the needle on this issue and to bring justice to families who have lost their loved ones. In 2020, we made progress through the passage of Savanna's Act and the Not Invisible Act—instructing the administrative branch to take desperately needed actions to improve coordination and communication about missing and murdered indigenous people. But there is much more work to be done. I urge this committee to make the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous people a priority by conducting an oversight hearing of this administration and the previous one's implementation of these landmark laws, and consider what more needs to be done to end this silent crisis..

Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for allowing me to speak at this Member Day, and I appreciate your leadership and attention to these important issues. I look forward to partnering with you, the committee, and my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to deliver for the people of Arizona's 4<sup>th</sup> District.