



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

For Immediate Release:

August 23, 2021

Contact: Rep. Nancy VanderMeer

(608) 266-8366

Statement on Temporary Housing of Afghans at Fort McCoy

Tomah, WI – On Sunday afternoon, the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office released information stating that the Department of Defense, through U.S. Northern Command and in support of the Department of State, recently approved and is now temporarily housing vulnerable Afghans at three military installations in the United States, including Fort McCoy. Furthermore, it was stated that special immigrant visa applicants, their families and other individuals at risk had arrived at Fort McCoy.

Representative Nancy VanderMeer (R-Tomah) released the following statement:

“Last week, upon learning of the potential temporary placement of Afghans at Fort McCoy, I immediately reached out formally and informally to my contacts at Fort McCoy and the 88th Readiness Division. I was also in touch with our Congressional Delegation to learn what information was available. Unfortunately, that really wasn’t much and no one involved with the operations at the federal or state level, including Governor Evers, thought it would be appropriate to provide pertinent information ahead of time to local legislative representatives, myself included.

“A number of constituents from my legislative district, which includes Fort McCoy, have reached out with questions pertaining to the placement of Afghans at Fort McCoy. Local government officials have reached out as well. I can share that I’ve been informally told that the individuals being housed at Fort McCoy are those that supported the United States mission in Afghanistan. Additionally, a number of current and former military members have shared their tremendous frustration with how exit operations have been conducted at the direction of the Biden Administration and as a result, their increased concern for the mental welfare of military personnel that served in Afghanistan. There are a number of governmental resources available for veterans experiencing difficulties, but I would encourage community members to do what they can to help check in on and support those that may especially be struggling with recent developments.

“I have an open request for a formal briefing on the matter that would include local and regional legislative colleagues and address questions pertaining to the number Afghans that are expected to arrive at Fort McCoy, short and long term plans for the duration of housing, whether or not there are plans to keep these individuals in the Monroe County area and what, if any, related workforce or educational needs may arise. Moreover, it will be important to learn about the vetting process for arriving individuals and the protocols in place, including, but not limited to, COVID-19 protocols and background information. The Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office is a resource to follow for public communication and to contact with questions. As always, I would also encourage residents and families to contact my office with questions or concerns.”

###

The 70th Assembly District includes portions of Monroe, Jackson, Portage and Wood counties