



National Asian Pacific American Bar Association



News Release

For Immediate Release

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NAPABA and SABA Condemn the President's Exclusion of Refugees and his "Muslim Ban"

WASHINGTON — The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) and the South Asian Bar Association of North America (SABA) condemn President Trump's executive order stopping refugees from entering the United States and halting immigration from Muslim-majority countries. These orders, which are based on the misguided idea that certain ethnic populations are more prone to violence, are incompatible with American values, and will not make our communities safer or our nation stronger. Notably, the order, (1) halts refugee admissions from all countries for at least 120 days, (2) indefinitely halts the admission of Syrian refugees, (3) lowers the number of refugee admissions to the United States, (4) grants states and localities the ability to stop refugees from settling in their jurisdiction, and (5) suspends all entry of individuals from certain Muslim-majority countries.

"We must recognize the humanitarian needs of refugee populations and we must refuse to act based on fear and intolerance," said NAPABA President Cyndie Chang. "Policies that discriminate against members of the Muslim community go against our values as Americans. President Trump's anti-immigrant executive orders open the door to a de facto 'Muslim ban,' and roll back efforts to create safe and supportive communities. As Asian Pacific Americans who are first, second, or third generation immigrants — which includes refugees, undocumented, and Muslims — we know all too well the harm these types of restrictive policies may cause."

"Criminalizing and stigmatizing a group of people simply for their religious beliefs, what they look like and where they come from, violates the American spirit of equality, fairness and innocence until proven guilty," said SABA President Vichal Kumar. "The carve out in the Executive Actions for religious minorities challenges any assertion that these orders do not directly target Muslims. An outright ban of an entire group is an overbroad and unjustified response to a threat that is based solely on conjecture and unsupported by facts. These actions will leave a legacy of creating deeper mistrust of our communities."

As organizations that serve and represent the interests of Asian Pacific American attorneys, we know firsthand the harmful legacy of national security programs and exclusionary immigration

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laws that have unfairly targeted our communities. Our communities have experienced exclusion by law from the 1800s through the 1960s — with bans on country admission like the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Immigration Act of 1924. We remember the discrimination and hate crimes that our communities experienced in the forced incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Our communities, especially our Arab, Muslim, Sikh, and South Asian communities were viewed with suspicion and hate, and subjected to violence in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks. We recognize the hope the United States represents to those in humanitarian crises, including to refugees from Asia and the Middle East who have accounted for over half of the refugees admitted to the United States since 1975. Although national security and public safety are critical for all Americans, policies and practices that discriminate against refugees or immigrants on the basis of national origin, race, ethnicity, or religion will not achieve these goals.

Refugees, like other immigrants, enrich our communities and contribute significantly to American society and we oppose efforts to reduce the number of refugees entering the United States. Refugees encounter a high level of scrutiny and security screening before arriving in the United States, often taking almost two years. Those refugees who are admitted for resettlement are usually the most helpless and have fled violence or persecution, such as Asian Pacific American immigrants who came and who still come to the United States due to volatile conditions, war, or strife in their countries of origin.

When our laws are fueled by stereotypes, fear, and mistrust, families are torn apart. NAPABA and SABA stand strongly against government policies and practices that enable racial profiling and discrimination. These policies only provoke and intensify xenophobia and hate or bias motivated acts against communities such as ours.

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NAPABA is the national association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students. NAPABA represents the interests of over 50,000 attorneys and over 75 national, state, and local bar associations. Its members include solo practitioners, large firm lawyers, corporate counsel, legal services and non-profit attorneys, and lawyers serving at all levels of government. NAPABA engages in legislative and policy advocacy, promotes APA political leadership and political appointments, and builds coalitions within the legal profession and the community at large. NAPABA also serves as a resource for government agencies, members of Congress, and public service organizations about APAs in the legal profession, civil rights, and diversity in the courts.

SABA North America (formerly NASABA/North American South Asian Bar Association) is a voluntary bar organization and serves as an umbrella organization to 26 chapters in the United States and Canada. SABA North America is a recognized forum for professional growth and advancement for South Asian attorneys in North America and seeks to protect the rights and liberties of the South Asian community across the continent. Learn more at www.sabanorthamerica.com.