



5 reasons Congress should repeal Trump's immigrant and refugee ban

President Trump's policies undermine America's efforts to combat Islamic extremism and terrorism around the world

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President Trump signed an executive order Friday that would ban all Syrian refugees and almost all refugees from all countries from entering the U.S. for six months, while cutting the overall annual limit for refugees in half and banning for at least 90 days all immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries. The order implies this ban could continue indefinitely for certain countries. These policies won't improve national security and will undermine America's efforts to combat Islamic extremism and terrorism around the world.

1) The order violates the law. Under the Immigration Act of 1965, the president may not refuse to give visas to immigrants coming to live in the United States permanently due to their nationality. The provision is unequivocal in stating that no person may "be discriminated against in the issuance of an immigrant visa because of the person's race, sex, nationality, place of birth, or place of residence." While this doesn't apply to temporary visitors or refugees, I have previously explained in detail why the president cannot legally enforce this order against immigrants who are sponsored by employers or family members in the U.S.

2) Refugees and immigrants from Muslim-majority countries are not a serious threat to Americans. The order would ban all people entering the U.S. from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, and Yemen, and yet no terrorist from these places has carried out a lethal attack in the U.S. Indeed, no Libyans or Syrians have even been convicted of planning such an attack. Moreover, the likelihood of being killed by any refugee from any country is just 1 in 3.64 billion a year. This discrimination is arbitrary and cannot be rationally justified based on an assessment of the risk. It is worth remembering that German Jews were turned away on a similar pretense that they could be Nazi spies—only to be killed in death camps.

3) The order aids Islamic State. ISIS has said it wishes to "compel the Crusaders to actively destroy the gray zone themselves," forcing Western Muslims to "either apostatize... or [emigrate] to the Islamic State and thereby escape persecution from the crusader governments and citizens." They want this overreaction. The only thing keeping ISIS from imploding are its

new recruits, which makes winning the propaganda war critical. Accepting refugees deprives ISIS of human resources. The Caliphate's main source of income is the people it extorts. One refugee told the New York Times: "ISIS would not let us leave. They said, 'You are going to the infidels.'" What could be more important than making the "infidels" more popular than ISIS?

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4) Muslim immigrants to the U.S. are reforming Islam. American Muslims are 81% first- or second-generation Americans who came from among the most socially illiberal countries in the world. Yet they comprise the most socially liberal and tolerant group of Muslims in the world. In fact, during the most recent seven years when Muslim immigration was at its highest level, America's Muslims grew increasingly socially tolerant of other religions and homosexuality. U.S. Muslim immigrants are spreading goodwill about America's freedoms around the world. "When I talk to my family they ask, 'How is the treatment of Americans,' and I say 'it's wonderful,'" one Syrian refugee explained. U.S. immigration is creating a cohort of liberal Muslims who can confront radicalism worldwide.

5) America's tradition of accepting refugees should be defended. Since World War II, the U.S. has accepted millions of refugees fleeing communism and totalitarianism around the world. The Roosevelt administration's rejection of Jews fleeing the Holocaust was one of the more shameful acts of any American president. Rather than return to such a policy targeted at a new group of persecuted people, the U.S. should continue to accept humanitarian immigration, not because refugees can improve local economies—though they can—and not because they can provide tangible intelligence against ISIS—though they do—but because getting out of the way and allowing people to escape violence is the bare minimum of moral decency.

America may have no moral duty to put out fires around the world, but it does have a moral duty not to block the fire exits.

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