



Jenna Bush's Message About Acceptance Echoes A Powerful Speech You May Have Forgotten

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Former president George W. Bush's daughters, Jenna and Barbara, have publicly supported former president Barack Obama's daughters during their transition out of the White House. Now the younger Bush twin has a supportive message for another community; Jenna Bush shared her father's 2001 speech about acceptance on Twitter. By doing this, she sent an important message about tolerance in the wake of President Donald Trump's travel ban. Through her tweet, Jenna reminded Americans "to teach acceptance and love to our kids for all races, all religions."

Trump recently signed an executive order which temporarily bars refugees from entering the country, as well as travelers from several majority Muslim countries. "Everybody is arguing whether or not it is a BAN," Trump tweeted on Feb. 1. "Call it what you want, it is about keeping bad people (with bad intentions) out of country." Trump's tweet, of course, ignores the fact that no refugees from banned countries have killed anyone during terrorist attacks in the United States, CNN reported. Just as a comparison point, traffic accidents kill on average 37,000 people a year in the United States, according to the CATO Institute. Somehow, Trump hasn't banned cars yet, despite the significantly greater threat they pose to American lives.

Jenna's father George has pointed out on multiple occasions the need to distinguish between Muslims and terrorists who claimed to be Muslim. "The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam," George said after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. "That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace." To be fair, it's true that George did push for the controversial "War on Terror," which many argue promoted anti-Muslim rhetoric. But he made it clear that he did not blame the entire religion or those who practice it for terrorism. Instead, George called Islam a "faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world," during his "Islam is Peace" speech.

On the other hand, Trump has called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States," in the past, Vox reported. "I'm establishing new vetting measures to keep radical Islamic terrorists out of the United States of America. Don't want them here," Trump said about his travel ban, Reuters reported. And as recently as last year, Trump told CNN's Anderson Cooper, "I think Islam hates us."

Somehow, with these statements, Trump managed to discount the millions of Muslims who call the United States their home. Through his policies and words, he discriminates against refugees

and immigrants based on their religion. And his words have an impact not just internationally, but domestically; for the month following Trump's election, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported 315 anti-immigrant incidents, and 112 anti-Muslim incidents. The SPLC reported more than 1,000 bias-related incidents for that month, and in 37 percent of the incidents, Trump reportedly was directly referenced by the perpetrators.

It's clear that what we say and do has impacts on actual people, the vast, vast majority of whom have nothing to do with terrorist attacks. As the CATO Institute reports, you only have a 0.00003 percent chance of being killed by a foreign-born terrorist. So instead of dragging Islam under the bus, it would make more sense to treat each other with respect, regardless of race or religion, as Jenna pointed out.

I never thought I'd be quoting one of George's old speeches, and I'm not alone in that. When he hosted "Saturday Night Live," Aziz Ansari said he had a similar revelation while watching "Islam is Peace." But as Jenna tweeted, George's speech carries a message that America needs to be reminded of today.

There's a lot we can do to combat Islamophobia and other hate crimes; for starters, here's an illustrated guide on what to do if you see a hate crime or harassment. Because frankly Islamophobia should not be tolerated in America, or any other country for that matter.