

The San Diego  
**Union-Tribune.**

## **Trump's speech leaves San Diegan immigrant wanting**

Joshua Stewart

February 28, 2017

In the wake of a speech that touched on the military, crime, and prescription drug research, a guest from San Diego sitting in House gallery for President Donald Trump's address Tuesday night said the speech didn't touch one of the most contentious issues of the first weeks of the new administration: the refugee travel ban.

Quinn Dang said the president failed to address how his policy hurt the lives of people who were trying to immigrate to the United States in limbo, sparked chaos at airports, and created a hostile culture for people who recently entered the country.

"What the speech didn't convey is a sense of what America is about, in terms of welcoming people of all different backgrounds and the multiculturalism that makes our country great," Dang, who immigrated from Vietnam when she was 6 years old. She is now a lawyer working in Washington, D.C.

"One speech doesn't change the facts on the ground, and what people see is what they saw in the chaos of the travel ban," she said. As she volunteered at an airport as an attorney representing would-be immigrants whose entry into the United States was barred by one of Trump's executive orders, it reminded her own experience coming to the country with her parents.

"It was the same people who were landing at the airport who are refugees. It wasn't very different how my parents came to the U.S. at San Diego Lindburgh airport in 1993," she said.

Her father spent five years incarcerated as a political prisoner in Vietnam, and came to the U.S. in the Orderly Departure Program before settling in San Diego. Dang started first grade without knowing English, but graduated at the top of her class at Mira Mesa High School before graduating from Harvard University and later Georgetown University Law Center. She previously worked for Rep. Susan Davis, D-San Diego, who invited her to attend the president's speech.

In response to Trump's immigration-related executive orders many Democrats in Congress invited immigrants to show the president the implications of his policies.

Rep. Judy Chu, D-Monterey Park, invited Sara Yarjani, a graduate student from Iran who studying at the California Institute for Human Sciences in Encinitas. Yarjani was held at the Los

Angeles International Airport for nearly 23 hours and was sent back to Vienna where she was visiting family. She returned to the U.S. after the courts blocked Trump's ban.

In his speech, Trump made references to immigrants who are criminals and security threats that are unable to sustain themselves financially.

He called for increased vetting procedures for potential immigrants and pledged to "take new steps to keep our nation safe." He mentioned three cases where people were killed by people who came to the country illegally.

A handful of studies, including one from the Cato Institute, show that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than people born in the United States.

Other nations, Trump said, have a merit-based immigration system. "Yet, In America, we do not enforce this rule, straining the very public resources that our poorest citizens rely upon," he said.

Trump did not mention refugees in his address. One of his executive orders temporarily stopped refugees from all countries from entering the U.S., indefinitely barred refugees from Syria and temporarily barred any travelers from seven countries, including Iran.