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## Republicans Go Largely Silent As Trump Bars Refugees And Immigrants From U.S.

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There's been thunderous outcry on Capitol Hill in the hours since President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Friday stopping Muslims and refugees from entering the U.S.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) said "tears are running down the cheeks of the Statue of Liberty" as the U.S. turns away immigrants.

Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) warned that the president "just handed ISIS a path to rebirth."

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.), a Marine veteran, said that Trump's action puts U.S. troops' lives at risk and that Moulton is "ashamed that he is our president."

"History will judge where America's leaders stood today," lamented Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.).

That's just a sampling of dozens of statements being fired out by Democrats. On the Republican side, the reaction is significantly different: silence.

GOP lawmakers, who now control both chambers of Congress, have gone quiet in response to the president's unilateral action that bans Syrian refugee resettlement in the U.S. indefinitely, shuts down the nation's entire refugee program for 120 days, and bars all immigrants and visitors from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the U.S. for at least 90 days.

As The New York Times' Glenn Thrush observed on Twitter, Republicans haven't been this quiet "since the last positive jobs report under Obama." HuffPost spotted statements from just four GOP members of Congress, all in support of Trump's move. One of them, Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), said it's important to deny refugees entry "to help prevent jihadists from infiltrating the United States."

It's worth noting that the U.S. refugee screening process is already very intensive. The likelihood of being killed by a refugee terrorist in the U.S. is 1 in 3.6 billion, per a new Cato Institute report.

The smattering of Republicans who issued statements didn't raise concerns about the fact that Trump had effectively imposed a religious test for traveling to the United States. The president's

order was already causing chaos at U.S. airports, as refugees and immigrants arrived late Friday or Saturday, only to be detained or told they can't enter the country.

It's not just rank-and file Republicans trying to duck the issue. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) hasn't said a peep. His counterpart, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), is one of the handful who did respond to Trump's action — by supporting it, while simultaneously saying America is a “compassionate” nation.

“Our number one responsibility is to protect the homeland. We are a compassionate nation, and I support the refugee resettlement program, but it's time to reevaluate and strengthen the visa vetting process,” Ryan said. “This is why we passed bipartisan legislation in the wake of the Paris attacks to pause the intake of refugees. President Trump is right to make sure we are doing everything possible to know exactly who is entering our country.”

It was just months ago that Ryan was condemning Trump's campaign trail threat to institute a Muslim ban. Back then, when few expected Trump to win the election, Ryan said targeting immigrants didn't reflect “America's fundamental values.”

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**WASHINGTON**—House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) today issued the following statement:

*“America's greatness is built on the principles of liberty and preserved by the men and women who wear the uniform to defend it. As I have said on numerous occasions, a religious test for entering our country is not reflective of these fundamental values. I reject it. Many Muslim Americans have served valiantly in our military, and made the ultimate sacrifice. Captain Khan was one such brave example. His sacrifice—and that of Khizr and Ghazala Khan—should always be honored. Period.”*

Before he was vice president, Mike Pence, too, denounced the idea of banning an entire group of people from the country based on their religion. Here he is in December 2015, when he was governor of Indiana:

On Saturday, Ryan spokeswoman AshLee Strong pushed back on the idea that Trump's action targets Muslims.

“This is not a religious test and it is not a ban on people of any religion,” she said.

The difference between then and now is that Trump is the president. Republican Party leaders like Ryan and McConnell appear willing to give him a pass on whatever extreme actions he wants to take — instituting a Muslim ban, directing Congress to spend billions to build a wall along the Mexican border — as long as he helps them pass laws they want pass, like cutting taxes for corporations and repealing the Affordable Care Act. These are types of things Republicans have been itching to do, but couldn't under President Barack Obama.

It remains to be seen when, or if, Republicans will draw a line on embracing Trump's controversial and, in this case, racist actions. When even hawkish former Vice President Dick Cheney has suggested Trump's ideas go too far, it appears there is a line somewhere.

“This whole notion that somehow we can just say no more Muslims, just ban a whole religion, goes against everything we stand for and believe in,” Cheney said in December 2015.