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Travel Ban Won't Make U.S. Safer

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We can appreciate fair, consistent, sensible immigration practices to keep Americans safe, but welcoming people from all over the world is part of what has always built the U.S. up, not what tears it down or holds it back.

This is especially true for people seeking refuge from war-torn countries. Refugees from Syria, for instance, are fleeing the same brutal enemy the U.S. is trying to stop — the Islamic State.

The executive order President Donald Trump issued Jan. 27, now suspended by court order, includes 120-day suspension of all refugee admissions to the U.S. and an indefinite ban on refugees from Syria, plus a 90-day ban on travelers of any kind from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen.

Many people say its implementation was rushed and disorganized, that it needlessly messed up the lives of tons of innocent people, and that the selection of counties was arbitrary — none of them was home to terrorists who committed recent attacks in the U.S. motivated by radical Islamic beliefs. We think it's all of these things, but that's the *"how"* of it. The *"what"* is more important.

It's just unkind, and for no good reason.

Yes, no good reason. Its reasons are fear and dislike of foreigners, and those are bad.

No, it's not going to make us safer from terrorists, because the refugees the U.S. takes in aren't terrorists. Over the last 40 years, the U.S. refugee program has taken in about 3.25 million people. Of those, only 20 or so have been convicted of any terrorism-related crime, in which they have killed exactly three Americans, according to Alex Nowrasteh, an immigration expert at the libertarian Cato Institute. The killers were three Cuban refugees in the 1970s, before the Refugee Act of 1980 standardized admission procedures.

Based on those numbers, it's irrational to fear refugees; rather, it's wise to welcome them as peace-loving new neighbors.

Existing safeguards are strong. President Barack Obama had only committed to accept 10,000 of the millions of Syrian refugees, which is pretty selective. The U.S. already subjects refugees to more than a year-and-a-half of vetting. Many of them have been living in camps for longer than that, sometimes more than a decade. Syrian refugees in particular are fleeing the same forces almost all Americans oppose, such as the Islamic State. They, of all people, have passed up

opportunities to be radicalized, and they are eager to start a new life, working hard and following the law in pursuit of the American dream.

President Trump's travel and refugee ban might even make us less safe. It could put a target on Americans' backs when they go abroad, or play into the Islamic State's terrorist recruitment.

Yet despite all of that, many Americans still support the travel-refugee ban.