



Joint Statement Regarding President Trump's Recent Executive Action

College Republicans and University Democrats

"Our most important allies in the fight against ISIL are the vast majority of Muslims who reject its apocalyptic ideology of hatred." - John McCain (R-AZ)

"If we turn our backs on widows and orphans fleeing the very evil we despise, we do not defeat our enemies; we surrender to them." - Tim Kaine (D-VA)

On January 27th, 2017, President Donald Trump signed an executive order entitled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States." While both of our organizations respect and understand the need to ensure the safety and security of our country as well as the importance of encouraging healthy debate on immigration reform and refugee settlement, *we are also concerned about the significant flaws of this action.*

Specifically, this executive order bans citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States and halts the admission of refugees whose lives are in peril. The hasty implementation of this order has left many scholars, students, and former members of our military in extended periods of detention or a state of limbo, afraid to return to the country that they call home.

This action raises a number of ethical, humanitarian, and legal concerns that both of our organizations would like to address. A blanket ban on any religion, ethnicity, nationality, or any other trait is not only unconstitutional, but is also un-American and antithetical to the values and diversity upon which our country was founded. *Our country is great because of our diversity, not in spite of it.* As students, we have seen first-hand how our international students add a necessary and valuable diversity of opinion which enriches the education of all at the University of Virginia. Regardless of political ideology, protecting the values of the University and the nation, as well as our students and their access to a world-class education at the University, must be a priority.

Furthermore, thousands of refugees, many of them individuals vulnerable to severe human rights violations, are now forced to remain in atrocious conditions. These people are attempting to flee the same terror that we are working to defeat. It is chilling that this sudden change of policy regarding refugees - without discourse or an alternative plan of action - was authorized on Holocaust Remembrance Day. The vow to never again commit the negligence of World War II and the Holocaust is clearly broken when executive orders such as this one are enacted. We, residents of Charlottesville, a city which hundreds of refugees call home, are particularly disheartened.

We believe this executive order will also be used by enemies of the United States as a way to recruit members to their radical organizations. While its intention was to weaken terrorist organizations, this ban will instead further complicate relations with the identified countries, as well as other Muslim-majority countries, and encourage Anti-American sentiment. Furthermore, this executive action will make it more difficult to form coalitions with these nations in the future, a crucial component in our fight against the Islamic State and other terrorist organizations. As we have learned in the past, unilateral action is unsustainable, and we cannot act without others' help and support.

In closing, we again emphasize that a healthy debate on the best ways to protect our country is appropriate and necessary. Such discussion will no doubt continue as we work toward solutions for these important issues in the following years. However, ***neither the College Republicans nor the University Democrats believe that President Trump's recent executive order is the answer.*** We hope that President Trump amends his current executive order to help ease these concerns.

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In a time of unprecedented partisanship, the College Republicans and University Democrats at the University of Virginia are actively working to find commonalities where they exist between our two organizations. Despite frequent disagreements over ideology and policy, we both prioritize the safety and rights of individuals over the temporary success of our respective parties.

Both the College Republicans and University Democrats remain open and welcoming places for immigrant, DACA, and Muslim students on grounds. We stand by these, and all students, fully. More information about our organizations can be found online at: www.collegerepublicansatuva.com and www.demsatuva.org.