April 10, 2019

Dear Members of Congress,

As 209 religious leaders and 92 faith-based organizations across faith traditions, we write to express our strong support for the National Origin-Based Antidiscrimination for Nonimmigrants Act (NO BAN Act), led by Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) and Representative Judy Chu (D-CA). The NO BAN Act would end the harmful refugee, Muslim, and asylum bans put in place by this administration and establish vital protections against future discriminatory bans.

We are called by our sacred texts and faith principles to love our neighbor, accompany the vulnerable, and welcome the sojourner. Our congregations, synagogues, and mosques have historically played key roles in assisting refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and other newcomers with housing, language, jobs, and social supports necessary to integrate and thrive. Yet, over the last two years, the administration has undertaken a series of attacks against our refugee, asylum seeking, and Muslim neighbors. Together, the Muslim ban on travel from several Muslim-majority countries, asylum ban that wrongfully and illegally blocks people who cross between ports of entry from applying for asylum, and refugee ban that seeks to dismantle the resettlement program deny vulnerable families their fundamental right to safety, condemn them to return to unfathomable danger, and prolong family separation. To restrict thousands of people based on discrimination forsakes our nation’s ideals of compassion, hospitality, and welcome.

We cannot condone excluding people based on their nationality or religious background, but instead must work toward inclusivity and justice for all. Religious faith or national origin should never be an obstacle to whether we extend a hand of welcome to the refugee or the immigrant. To close the door to those who are Muslim or of other faiths, is not a faithful expression of the principle that all are created equal. This manner of exclusion weakens what has made our country strong – a commitment to stand with the vulnerable, the oppressed, the suffering, regardless of their religious faith or where they come from.

Since the inception of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) in 1980, the U.S. has been an international model providing refugees protection through our historically bipartisan public-private resettlement program. Refugee resettlement is an option for those who cannot return to their home country due to ongoing violence or for reasons of personal safety, and who cannot stay in the country into which they have fled. As a pillar of our national foreign policy, our nation’s resettlement program represents a standard of excellence that other countries around the world look to as a touchstone for their own policies.

Family unity is a cornerstone of U.S. migration and refugee resettlement, given the importance of family values in our country and the crucial role that a united family plays in refugee protection and integration, and it is unacceptable to see families being separated due to U.S. policies. People of faith are especially concerned by the implications of the historically low refugee admissions goal and the incredibly low refugee arrivals for particular populations of concern such as families seeking to reunite, religious minorities, and children. This low level of arrivals signifies an abdication of our nation’s leadership in humanitarian protection through resettlement. Similarly, we express our deep concern for the impact of low arrivals on religious minorities, including Christians, Muslims, and others who find themselves persecuted because of their religious affiliation and are thus left without options to safely practice their faith.

We are guided by our faith to love God and love our neighbors, whoever they may be. We cannot separate the two, and seek to be welcoming of all people because loving God means loving our fellow human being. We pray that our country reflects principles of both welcome and of religious freedom, and that we remember the value of diversity. At no other time has our moral responsibility to uphold these principles been greater.
The NO BAN Act upholds principles of religious freedom and our moral obligation to welcome. It would ensure that no one is banned from our country based on religious or nationality-based discrimination. The bill seeks important changes to the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) by outlawing discrimination in the entry of immigrants or nonimmigrants based on religion, in addition to the protections against discrimination based on race, sex, nationality, place of birth, and place of residence already in place. The NO BAN Act also amends the provision of the INA that has granted presidents the authority to suspend or restrict the entry of non-citizens by limiting this authority to align with responsible uses of the power by prior Democratic and Republican administrations, and by putting in place key congressional notification and reporting requirements as important safeguards against any future abuses of this authority.

We urge you to cosponsor the NO BAN Act and be bold in choosing moral, just policies that welcome, regardless of faith or national origin, and provide refuge for vulnerable individuals seeking protection in accordance with our nation’s highest ideals.

Sincerely,

Faith-based Organizations

African American Ministers In Action
Alliance of Baptists
American Muslim Empowerment Network (AMEN)
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Bethany United Church of Christ
Billings Sanctuary Rising
Blessed Sacrament Church
BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz
Bridgeport United Church of Christ
Buffalo Immigrant Leadership Team (BILT)
Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Church World Service
Churches United To Save & Heal {CUSH}
Columbus Sanctuary Collective - Colectivo Santuario de Columbus
Congregational Sanctuary Working Group of Western NC
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
DC - MD Justice For Our Neighbors
Diocese of Atlanta
Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)
Disciples Justice Action Network
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Emgage Action
Episcopal Faith Based Organization
Equal Partners in Faith
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Ezher Bloom Mosque
Faith in Public Life
Faiths for Safe Water
First United Methodist Church, Missoula
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Franciscans for Justice
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Glocal Partners
Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition
Illinois Conference United Church of Christ
Inter-Church Ministries of Nebraska
Interfaith Action for Human Rights
Interfaith Action of SW Michigan
Interfaith Alliance
Interfaith Coalition on Immigration MN
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
Interfaith Worker Justice
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Priests of the Sacred Heart, US Province
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Maine Council of Churches
Missionary Srs. of the Immaculate Conception
Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice
Muslim Community Center of Indianapolis
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Jewish Women
National Justice for Our Neighbors
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Neighbors In Faith
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
NHCUCC Immigrant and Refugee Support Group
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors
NYS Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Pax Christi Metro New York
Pax Christi USA
Peace Catalyst International
Peace with Justice Ministries, Great Plains Conference, The United Methodist Church
Poligon Education Fund
Presbyterian Church USA
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Religious Sisters of Charity
Shoulder to Shoulder
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community
Sisters of Salaam Shalom
Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God
Sojourners
St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA)
Tr’uah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The Church of the Good Shepherd
The Episcopal Church
The Hat Project
The Revolutionary Love Project
Unitarian Universalist Association
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ)
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
University Unitarian Church
Wellspring United Church of Christ
WHEATON FRANCISCAN SISTERS Justice and Peace Office
WI United Methodist Committee on Immigrant & Refugee Ministries
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice

Faith Leaders

Alabama

Rev. John Mobley, Christian Church in AL-NW FL
Rev. Majadi Baruti, Udja Temple Ministries

Arizona

USA Frank Bergen, Episcopal Church of St. Matthew

Arkansas

Pastor Mary Beth Kovanen, ELCA

California

Pastor Elaine Schoepf, Seaside Community Church UCC
Ms. Maureen Shannon-Chapple, InsightLA
Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman, First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, UCC
N/A Tahil Sharma, Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles
Rev. Keith Inouye, Wesley United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. L Barrett, UCC
Rev. Melissa Campbell-Langdell, All Saints Episcopal Church
The Rev. Dr. Joanne Leslie, St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Rev. Heidi Worthen Gamble, Presbytery of the Pacific
Rev. Dr. Cynthia Alloway, Presbyterian Church of the Roses
Rev. Mary Kay Will, United Methodist Church
Rev. Akiko Miyake-Stoner, United Japanese Christian Church
Rev. Sandie Richards, First UMC of San Fernando
Rev. Dr. Sally Howard, All Saints Church, Pasadena
Rev. Dr. Diana Gibson, Multifaith Voices for Peace & Justice
Bro. Mark Schroeder, O.F.M., Franciscans for Justice
Rev. Shinshu Roberts, Ocean Gate Zen Center
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Rev. Dan Harper, Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto
Rev. Elizabeth Griswold, Parkside Community Church, UCC

Colorado

Rev. Wayne A. Laws, Mountain View United Church
Rabbi Deborah Bronstein, Congregation Har HaShem

Connecticut

Father Ronald Kolanowski, St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Rev. Kristina Hansen, Mary Taylor Memorial UMC
Rev. Persida Rivera-Mendez, Ministerio Nueva Creacion
Rev. Carla Dietz, First Congregational Church of Greenwich
Rev. Deacon Thomas Mariconda, Regional Deacon-Naugatuck Valley
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Rev. Fred L Hammond, Manatee Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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Rev. Linda Jones, Barnesville First UMC

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Pastor Laura Armstrong, Cole Community Church

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Rev. Dr. Linda Eastwood, McCormick Theological Seminary
Rev. Kimberlee W. Vasko, St. John's UCC - Lyons
Mr. Tom Cordaro, St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church
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Rev. Sara Wohlleb, UCC
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David Carlson, Franklin College
Rev. Paul Tché, Council on Christian Unity

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Rev. (ret.) Jim Dale, First United Methodist Church
Sister Joy Peterson, Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, IA

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Rev. Jane Field, Faith Lutheran Church
United States Stephanie Richmond, Peace Catalyst International
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Rev. Sandra Carlson Alexis, First English Lutheran
Rev. Patricia Hollinger, Church of the Brethren/Quaker
Rev. Karen Lee Scrivo, Unitarian Universalist Community Minister
Rabbi Julie Gordon, Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation

Maryland (and Virginia)

Rabbi Charles Feinberg, Tifereth Israel

Massachusetts

Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes, St. Matthew's United Methodist Church
Rev. Allan Anderson, Crawford Memorial UMC
Dr. Abdul Cader Asmal, Islamic Council of New England
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Rev. Tyler Connoley, United Church of Christ

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Rev. Daniel Disch, Atonement Lutheran Church
Rev. Molly Sasser-Goehner, Immanuel Lutheran Church-ELCA
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Nebraska

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New Hampshire

Rev. Dale Hempen, Retired

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Brother Jerry Rivers, Church of Christ
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Rev. John Long, First Presbyterian Church, Buffalo
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Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Lewis, Middle Collegiate Church
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Rev. George Tulloch, Retired United Methodist clergy
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Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
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Rev. Luis-Alfredo Cartagena Zayas, Park Avenue Christian Church (DoC)/UCC
Father John P. Duffell, Blessed Sacrament Church

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North Dakota

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Rev. Dr. Erwin Goedicke, North Presbyterian Church
Reverend Patricia Clary, West Cincinnati PC
Rev. Kathy Angi, Winton Hills Presbyterian Church
Sister Sheilamarie Tobbe, Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland
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Sister Ann Marie Chmielewski, Sisters of St. Francis
Sister Kateri Theriault, Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvanian, OH

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Oregon
Rev. Tara Wilkins, Bridgeport United Church of Christ

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Rev. Dr. Bruce Bouchard, St. Jacob's (Stone) United Church of Christ
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Nancy Miller, WE Care Initiative, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
Rev. Ruth Sheets, U.C.C
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Immanuel Solomon, North Side Baptist
Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese, First Lutheran of Edinburg
Sister Cecile Roeger, Dominican Sisters of Houston
Rev. Dr. Clay Brantley, Grace Presbytery
Sister JT Dwyer, Holy Redeemer Catholic Church
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Rev. Jay Campbell, Mount Vernon UMC
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Rev Henry Brinton, Presbyterian Church (USA)
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Pastor Anne Hall, Lutheran Church in the San Juans
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Bishop Kirby Unti, NWWS
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Rabbi Mark Novak, Kesem

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Rabbi Renee Bauer, Jewish Social Services of Madison
Rev. Glenn Danz, St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice
Rev. Sonja Ingebritsen, Community of Hope UCC
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Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Rev. LeDayne McLeese Polaski, BPFWA ~ Bautistas por la Paz
Rabbi Salem Pearce, Truah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Rabbi Elyse Wechtman, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston, Disciples Center for Public Witness
Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller, Moravian Church Northern Province
Dr. Sayyid Syeed, Islamic Society of North America
Sister Dominica Lo Bianco, OSF, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sister Eileen Gannon, Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Sister Maria Orlandini, Catholic
Dianne Aid, TSSF Dianne Aud, The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice
Rev. Dr. Chuck Currie, Pacific University Center for Peace and Spirituality
Maha Elgenaidi, Islamic Networks Group (ING)
Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster, T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Sister Sara Dwyer, ASC, Adorers of the Blood of Christ, US Region
Mr. James Winkler, National Council of Churches
Sister Dominica Lo Bianco, OSF, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Valarie Kaur, The Revolutionary Love Project
Marcia Jolin, Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
Rev. Reginald Smith Melissa Stek, Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America

Other

Rev. Charlene Belsom Zellmer, DMV Sanctuary Congregation Network
Lay Person John Cheung, Northbrook United Methodist Church