

September 30, 2019

Dear Honorable Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren,

Thank you for your service and for holding a hearing on Trump Administration's Muslim Ban in the House of Representatives. I am writing to you to share my case and story on how President Trump's Travel Ban has affected me and my son, Mohammad Saleh Vatan. I kindly ask you to add my statement to House Judiciary's Subcommittee testimonies as one more victim of this unfair ban.

Dear Ms. Lofgren, I am 76 years old and blessed to be a father of four precious children; two daughters and two sons. I am writing to you hoping that sharing my story would ultimately help my older son with his immigrant visa case. I applied for my son in May 2012 so that one day he will be able to join rest of his family here in the U.S. My son had an interview in August of 2017 in Abu Dhabi at the U.S. Embassy. He submitted all of the necessary documents and a consular officer considered proposing a waiver for him. Since then, we have been waiting to hear back from the Embassy. My son is a fine commercial pilot and recently he was promoted to a captain. He also teaches English to freshman pilots and examines them before taking their English tests to become certified pilots. My son's career experience in aviation will also be an asset for this country and I am confident that he will continue his accomplishments in his field here in the U.S. as well.

Several years ago, I was diagnosed with stomach cancer. Doctors removed my stomach during the surgery and I am living without a stomach now. Last year, I was involved in a car accident when a car hit me walking on the sidewalk after getting my prescription from a pharmacy. I had a brain stroke and spent several days at the hospital in ICU section. My brain's left side stroke affected me by paralyzing the right side of my body and disabled my speech. At first, I was not able to keep my balance, walk, or speak with anyone. Luckily, I am back on my foot again but going through many difficulties when trying to talk. If necessary for the Subcommittee, I will be more than happy to provide you with all of my medical documentations and proofs. I believe that I was lucky enough to stay alive and see my son reunite with his family again. I want my son by my side, not only to help me with my medical conditions, but also to spend time with him before my departure. This old man's burden is not easy to handle and my son's reunion with me will be a new remedy both physically and mentally for his father.

I would like to conclude my statement by reminding you that even politicians from both side of the aisle attest to this fact that Iranian people are friends with American people and they have no hostility against each other. This travel ban is a blatant discrimination and is against U.S. Constitution by any means of translation or comprehension. When I first moved to the U.S., I thought to myself that I will go back to Iran after becoming a U.S. Citizen and live there until I die. But only after living several months in the U.S., I realized that I was always an American, just born in the wrong country. Every night, I go to bed praying that one of these days I will wake up in the morning and hear the best news; my son's visa is ready and he can join his family here in Maryland. I am counting the days until I go to the Dulles Airport and be the first person to hug my son, hold him in my arms, and welcome him to the greatest nation in the world. I truly appreciate the opportunity to share my story with you.

Cordially,



Ali Vatan