



Jews and Muslims and Allies Acting Together

Building Unity, Countering Hate, Enhancing Partnerships, Promoting Social Action

February 10, 2020

Hon. Jerrold Nadler
Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Nadler:

Jews and Muslims and Allies Acting Together (JAMAAT), a community of grass-roots Jews, Muslims and Interfaith Allies from across the Greater Washington, DC metropolitan area, is writing to reiterate and reaffirm our strong support for the National Origin-Based Anti-discrimination for Non-Immigrants (NO BAN) Act, previously expressed in our letter to your Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship and the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation for your hearing on September 24, 2019, in connection with the markup of this bill.

As we noted in our prior letter, it is difficult to conceive of measures as clearly violative of the fundamental rights that should be accorded to all of our religious and ethnic communities than the “travel bans” imposed by the Trump Administration, both in their initial and subsequent iterations. We view the NO BAN Act as a critically important measure that would repeal these prior unfair bans and restore the intent of our immigration laws as expressed for many decades, by requiring that any restrictions on entry of groups of people be supported by credible facts, be of a defined duration, and be necessary to address specific acts that threaten the safety of the American public, human rights, democracy, or international stability.

We believe that the recent Proclamation of the Trump Administration, which expands the prior ban to include six additional countries, demonstrates even more strongly the need for the NO BAN Act. The Administration claims that the new restrictions noted in the Proclamation are needed to ensure public security and safety, that they “are tailored to country-specific deficiencies, as well as travel-related risk to the Homeland,” and that they “do not reflect animus or bias against any particular country, region, ethnicity, race, or religion.” The objective circumstances related to these restrictions raise serious questions as to whether these claims are accurate. For example, we are unfamiliar with any evidence that there is a higher threat of terrorism or other harm to security or public safety that emanates from these countries than from many other countries in the world at large, and we see little basis to believe that even if an elevated threat existed from these countries, the particular restrictions chosen in the Proclamation would be effective in addressing any such elevated threat to security or public safety that existed.

The NO BAN Act provides Congress and this country an effective framework to assure that restrictions like these, from this or any future President, are bona fide measures to protect public safety, security, and other critical specified objectives, and are not tools of exclusion by race, religion, or ethnicity. Through the specific limitations, judicial review provisions, and disclosure requirements set forth in the Act, our country will have the assurance lacking today that restrictions that exclude groups of people under the one relevant section of the Immigration and Nationality Act will in fact serve legitimate objectives laid out by Congress.

We therefore continue to urge you to support the NO BAN Act, without substantive amendment from its current language.