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NCJW Statement to the Judiciary's Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship and Committee on Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Joint Hearing, "Oversight of the Trump Administration's Muslim Ban"

Tuesday, September 24, 2019

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) urges your support for the National Origin-Based Antidiscrimination for Nonimmigrants Act (NO BAN Act, H.R. 2214) and a thorough investigation of the administration's actions regarding the Muslim Ban. Congress must send the message that blanket bans are not acceptable.

NCJW is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. As Jews, we know what it's like to seek safety in the US, only to be turned away out of prejudice and under the pretense of "security." We are taught *va'ahavtem et ha-ger* — as we were once strangers, so must we welcome the stranger. It is imperative that we continue to open our communities to those fleeing violence or seeking better lives in the United States, regardless of how they worship.

The NO BAN Act is a historic civil rights bill that would repeal the Muslim Ban and prevent similar bans in the future. President Trump has used the legal framework justifying the Muslim ban to implement a ban on asylum seekers and grind the nation's refugee resettlement program to a halt in 2017. If Congress passes this bill, presidents would still have the power to issue narrow bans justified by evidence in the name of national security — but they would no longer be able to ban an entire community without culpability.

The history of the United States is replete with efforts to demonize and bar entry to groups of people based on their faith under the pretext of national security, including bans against Jews, Catholics, and Mormons. The Muslim Ban validates stereotypes about, and fuels discrimination against, Muslims. While it stands, the ban is a threat to our nation's core value religious freedom.

Everyone deserves to live in safety and security, regardless of how they worship. **Congress must investigate the administration's actions surrounding the Muslim Ban and pass the NO BAN Act without delay.**