

September 30, 2019

Dear Honorable Congresswoman Ms. Zoe Lofgren,

Thank you for your service and for holding a hearing on President Trump's Muslim Ban in the House of Representatives. I am writing to you to share my story with you on how President Trump's Travel Ban has affected me and my wife, Hana Rayiszadeh. I kindly ask you to add my statement to House Judiciary's subcommittee as one of the many testimonies.

I immigrated to the U.S. with my parents and my younger sister in 2007 and became a proud naturalized U.S. Citizen in 2013. I graduated from University of Maryland with a bachelor's degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Currently, I work as network administrator in a logistics company. Hana received her master's degree in Industrial Engineering from Tabriz University in 2014. She teaches and mentors Physics to high school and university students and is a dance instructor teaching Azeri dance to kids who perform at cultural events and wedding ceremonies. We met in 2006 and pronounced to be wife and husband happily in 2016.

In February 2018, Hana had an interview at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey. It was during that interview, she submitted all necessary documents and a consular officer proposed a waiver for Hana's case. Since then, we have been waiting for the U.S. Embassy in Ankara to issue a visa for her so she can join me here in America and begin our new life together.

President Trump's Travel ban has inflicted tremendous financial and emotional hardship on me as a U.S. citizen and Hana as a wife of a U.S. citizen. I am traveling to Iran as often as I can to see her. I was last there in March and plan to go there again in October for 3 weeks. Requesting this time off from work is also becoming a very stressful issue for me. Maintaining a long-distance relationship is becoming more frustrating and painful as time passes. Hana and I wait patiently to hear good news one day as we talk about our goals and dreams every day. The day when she can join me, we can start our family, live, love, travel, and come back to the same home after work under the same roof. Waiting this long has been an extremely frustrating process for us and our families. When we got married, we all knew that this was going to be a lengthy process, however; no one knew that a travel ban will go into effect and the wait would be longer than ever. The most frustrating part is that no one knows how much longer we have to wait.

It has been more than forty months since we got and I would like to conclude my statement by quoting former President of United States of America who was reading a letter from an immigrant sent to him in his last speech in 1988, "America represent something universal in the human spirit. I received a letter not long ago from a man who said, 'you can go to Japan to live, but you cannot become Japanese. You can go to France to live and not become Frenchman. You can go to live in German or Turkey, and you won't become a German or Turk. But anyone from any corner of the world can come to America to live and become an American.'" Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to share my case and story with you. No matter what, I will not give up on being an American who loves this country dearly and works hard to contribute to his community and serve his society; moreover, Hana and I will stay hopeful and carry on our love stronger than ever to live under the same roof and start our family soon.

Sincerely,



Farid Vatan