

Lawsuit Argues Trump's Latest Travel Ban Continues to Target Iranian Americans, Exacerbates Harm of Previous Travel Ban Orders

Iranian-American organizations and individual plaintiffs file challenge to Travel Ban 3.0, ask for response before EO takes effect Oct 18

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 10, 2017) – A new court filing in federal court in Washington D.C. challenging President Trump's latest iteration of the travel ban seeks to protect Iranian Americans in the United States and abroad. The lawsuit, filed by three prominent Iranian-American organizations as well as a number of individual plaintiffs, outlines the ways the policy is hurting families, professional and business opportunities, as well as the expansive Iranian-American community.

“The latest Presidential Proclamation on vetting capabilities is a wolf in sheep's clothing. As a permanent and more sweeping Travel Ban than its two predecessors it is even more egregious and will cause even more harm to Iranian American families and the contributions Iranian Americans make to the U.S. economy and society,” said Cyrus Mehri, founding partner of Washington, DC-based firm Mehri & Skalet, PLLC, who represents the plaintiffs. “I am very proud of our courageous individual clients and our dedicated organizational clients who continue to fight to protect the Iranian American community.”

The President's September 24 Proclamation, among other things, indefinitely bans all immigrant and almost all nonimmigrant visas to Iranian nationals and bans all immigrant visas and many non-immigrant visas to the nationals of five other majority-Muslim nations. Based on State Department historical data, it is estimated that 60 percent of visas subject to the ban would have been issued to Iranian nationals. On October 5, the government -- citing the September 24 Proclamation -- asked that the injunctions currently in place be lifted, with no provisions to allow visas for individuals with bona fide relationships with entities or individuals in the United States. The September 24 Proclamation will take effect at 12:01 a.m. on October 18, 2017.

A motion to lift the stay along with an amended complaint detailing the unlawful harm to individuals in the complaint was filed in federal court before Judge Tonya S. Chutkan who in April conducted the only evidentiary hearing on Travel Ban 2.0 and who issued an order expressing concerns about the Travel Ban.

- The Complaint has compelling examples from individual plaintiffs. Among the plaintiffs are: Mohammed Jahanfar, whose fiancé is in Iran studying for her Master's. Jahanfar, who served in the U.S. Navy and currently lives in California, is worried he and his fiancé will be unable to get married and live together. He says he joined the military in order to give back to his country, but never imagined the government would keep him from his loved ones.
- Reza Zoghi fled Iran with his family to escape violent persecution. He, along with his wife and three-year-old daughter, successfully completed the vetting process for resettlement, but they remain in indefinite limbo in Turkey, where he is unable to work and his daughter will be unable to enroll in school.
- Another plaintiff, who holds dual citizenship from the U.S. and Iran, is pregnant with her first child in New York City. With her husband working full time and no other close

relatives nearby, her mother is trying to move from Iran to help care for her grandchild. But the process continues to be on hold.

The three organizations – Pars Equality Center, Iranian American Bar Association (IABA) and Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA) – along with individual plaintiffs, now seek to lift the stay in this case and seek to enjoin Travel Ban 3.0.

Pars Equality Center, IABA and PAAIA, along with individual plaintiffs, filed this case on February 8 and amended it on March 15. On May 11, Judge Tanya S. Chutkan issued an order staying her consideration of the preliminary injunction motion, putting the case on hold. The new filing includes some additional individual plaintiffs particularly impacted by Travel Ban 3.0 as well as some of the earlier plaintiffs who continue to be impacted by the Trump Administration's illegal and discriminatory restrictions on travel and immigration. The plaintiffs are represented by the civil rights law firm Mehri & Skalet, PLLC, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Tycko & Zavareei LLP and Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer, LLP.

The brief and declarations, along with other information can be found at endthetravelban.com.

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