



June 30, 2017

JOINT STATEMENT

On the Travel Ban and Its Impact on LGBTQ Families

Our Family Coalition joins countless partners in the Strong Families network to condemn the State Department's re-issued, "modified" travel ban on visitors or refugees from six Muslim-majority nations. This ban accomplishes the very opposite of its stated intention, amplifying Islamophobia, endangering innocent people at home and abroad, and distracting from credible measures to address the real sources of domestic terrorism. And the recent Supreme Court finding has added an additional harm: permitting entry only to those found to have "bona fide" connections to the US, based on the Trump State Department definition of what a close family tie is.

Under this ruling, grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, aunts, cousins, and fiancés are not considered close enough family. As a result of this finding, LGBTQ family members suffering homophobic and transphobic persecution in their countries of origin have even fewer paths to refuge. Not one of the nations called out by this ban recognizes same-sex marriage, so all LGBTQ partners in these nations are prohibited from entry based on spousal recognition. Homosexuality is illegal in each of these nations: LGBT people in them are subject to flogging, electric shock and punishment up to and including the death penalty.

As noted by our partners at [Forward Together](#):

"In addition to legalizing discrimination through the Muslim ban, the Supreme Court's ruling puts the task of defining family in the hands of the Trump administration thus continuing one of the most heart-wrenching practices of our immigration system – forcing families to choose which family members to sponsor based on a hierarchy of relationships determined by the State Department, not based on how their families actually work or who they want or need to bring to the US. While Trump's new definition of family is currently limited to the Muslim ban, it is alarming to consider how this definition could create the framework for even more restricted definitions of family within our immigration system."

We couldn't agree more. Now is the time for broader, not narrower understandings of family. Now is the time for greater compassion, not less. We call on the Trump Administration and the State Department to halt this destructive order. And we all would do well to bear in mind the parable regarding the moment of dawn: a rabbi asks how we know the exact moment when night ends and day begins. The answer is this: when a stranger approaches, we think they are our family. We stand in solidarity with all immigrant families and will continue to work with partners to recognize and protect all of our family members.

In solidarity,

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Our Family Coalition (OFC) advances equity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) families with children with support, education and advocacy.

Forward Together transforms culture and policy, working at the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality. With courage and through connection, our community of changemakers secures the rights, recognition and resources all families need to thrive.