

Dear President Trump,

The United States is built on unique twin promises of pluralism and opportunity. As men and women in uniform, we believe that it is our duty to share our experiences with those who have never served, and we hold those twin promises dear. We have carried them, like a torch, through some of the darkest parts of the world, bearing a message: When you come to the United States, you are measured not by where you come from, but whether or not you subscribe to the common values we share.

Accordingly, we the undersigned veterans of the U.S. military demand that you honor our promise -- America's promise -- to the world by rescinding the punitive and ineffective executive order you issued last Friday targeting immigrants from seven Muslim-majority nations as well as refugees. One only needs look at the people who have been hurt by this order so far to see that it does nothing to keep our country safer and everything to damage the ideals that we hold most dear.

Some of the people hurt by your executive order are refugees from places that have experienced the kind of conflict that most Americans have seen only in their darkest of nightmares. We have welcomed them to our land in the past not only to show leadership to the world and because it was the right thing to do, but because our national security interest demands it; by the force of our example, we reject the philosophy of groups like ISIL who claim that certain groups of people cannot live and thrive within the West. But your executive order breaks that promise.

Some of the people hurt by your executive order are interpreters, who served alongside us on the frontlines in Iraq and Afghanistan. They believed in the values we said we were fighting for, and put their lives on the line to prove it -- helping us navigate language, culture, and terrain, and even picking up a rifle and saving our skins. In exchange for their service, we promised them and their families safe passage to a land where they would be free from those hunting them and judged not by where they were from, but by who they intended to become. But your executive order breaks that promise.

Some of the people hurt by your executive order are the most powerless in any society. The stories from airports across the country, where thousands gathered last night to contest your policy, bear this out: elderly people, sick and in wheelchairs; a husband and wife trying to reunite; children far too young to understand politics or ideologies or anything other than the desire to return to their bed after a long journey home. It is the essence of America that we treat these people not with suspicion, but compassion. But your executive order breaks that promise.

And yes, some of these people are none of these things. They are not the most desperate refugees, the most valiant interpreters, or the most vulnerable children and elderly. Yet still, they are people. People who want to come here to do well not at the expense of others, but for the sake of themselves and their families. We do not want an exception for any one group that

leaves these people behind, because that is not how America should work either. No, we want this entire order rescinded. There are ways to make our country safer, but punishing people based solely on their national origin and targeting those fleeing the worst violence in the world are not among them.

Mr. President, rescind this order. Reaffirm that America is a place promising opportunity and tolerance for all who subscribe to our values, and relight that torch those of us in the armed forces have carried across the world.

Honor our promise, because our global reputation and moral standing depend upon how bright and how far that light is allowed to shine.

*For veterans, national security professionals, interpreters, or refugees who would like to sign on to this letter, fill out the form at [www.honourourpromise.org](http://www.honourourpromise.org) and we'll add your name.*

Signed,

Shawn VanDiver, U.S. Navy

Matt Zeller, U.S. Army

Bill York, U.S. Army

Mike Breen, U.S. Army

Kristen Kavanaugh, U.S. Marine Corps

Will Rodriguez-Kennedy, U.S. Marine Corps

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Tom Lemmon, U.S. Marine Corps

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