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**America's core values**

1 message

**Madeleine Albright** <info@ofa.us>

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Reply-To: info@ofa.us

To: Liz Barrett &lt;LizBarrett@alumnae.mtholyoke.edu&gt;

## Organizing for Action

Liz --

By now, I'm sure you've heard about the executive order on immigration and refugees that the President signed on Friday. It bans Syrian refugees from entering our country, suspends the entire refugee program for 120 days, cuts in half the number of refugees we can admit, and halts all travel from certain Muslim-majority countries.

I felt I had no choice but to speak out against it in the strongest possible terms.

This is a cruel measure that represents a stark departure from America's core values. We have a proud tradition of sheltering those fleeing violence and persecution, and have always been the world leader in refugee resettlement. As a refugee myself who fled the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia, I personally benefited from this country's generosity and its tradition of openness. This order would end that tradition, and discriminate against those fleeing a brutal civil war in Syria.

There is no data to support the idea that refugees pose a threat. This policy is based on fear, not facts. The refugee vetting process is robust and thorough. It already consists of over 20 steps, ensuring that refugees are vetted more intensively than any other category of traveler.

The process typically takes 18-24 months, and is conducted while they are still overseas. I am concerned that this order's attempts at "extreme vetting" will effectively halt our ability to accept anyone at all. When the administration makes wild claims about Syrian refugees pouring over our borders, they are relying on alternative facts -- or as I like to call it, fiction.

The truth is that America can simultaneously protect the security of our borders and our citizens and maintain our country's long tradition of welcoming those who have nowhere else to turn. These goals are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, they are the obligation of a country built by

immigrants.

Refugees should not be viewed as a burden or as potential terrorists. They have already made great contributions to our national life. Syrian refugees are learning English, getting good jobs, buying homes, and starting businesses. In other words, they are doing what other generations of refugees -- including my own -- did. And I have no doubt that, if given the opportunity, they will become an essential part of our American fabric.

By targeting Muslim-majority countries for immigration bans and by expressing a clear preference for refugees who are religious minorities, there's no question this order is biased against Muslims. And when one faith is targeted, it puts us all at risk.

I will never forget sailing into New York Harbor for the first time and seeing the Statue of Liberty when I came here as a child. It proclaims "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." There is no fine print on the Statue of Liberty, and today she is weeping.

**This executive order does not reflect American values. If you agree, make your voice heard now.**

<https://my.ofa.us/Stand-Up-For-American-Values>

Thanks,

Madeleine Albright  
Former Secretary of State