

THE MELTING MELTING POT

WEST SIDE STORY EDITORIAL



As President Trump signed the executive order on immigration, the media was quick to coin it the **"Muslim ban."** Citizens across the nation refuse to stay silent as the order **defies the very basis upon which the United States was founded**—a country established by those fleeing religious persecution and thus dubbed the "land of the free" and a nation of immigrants. **The melting pot has transformed** into that which discriminates against certain ingredients, and brewing tensions are beginning to boil over.

West Side Story is home to students of varying cultural backgrounds. Our staffers have family who were refugees, immigrants or Holocaust survivors. But we are defined by more than that; we are also Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and atheists. We are a community that has arisen from those who came to America with nothing but the hope of becoming something. Because of our background, we are well acquainted with the importance of diversity and the American Dream.

Yet, Trump's executive order on immigration makes us wonder if the American Dream is even attainable anymore, when the order blatantly

WHAT IS AN EXECUTIVE ORDER?

An executive order is something the president issues telling employees of the executive branch how to interpret and carry out of the laws Congress makes. **They do not require approval of Congress.** The basis for their use comes from the phrase **"take care that the laws be faithfully executed"** in Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution. Executive orders can be overturned by the subsequent presidents.

betrays the ideals of our nation. It sets a dangerous precedent of discrimination, divisiveness and distrust between our nation and others. By creating an executive order that discriminates against Muslims, Trump is in fact perpetuating radicalization, as he fashions a newfound concept of America as an intolerant nation.

Although a campaign press release stated that the ban on Muslims from entering the United States will last "until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on," barring people from a country solely based on their religion or ethnicity is never justifiable. Furthermore, basing the legitimacy of this ban on a few radical extremists is greatly unfair. In fact, a 2015 *New America* study cites that 26 people in the United States were killed by Jihadists since 9/11 in comparison to the 48 killed by non-Muslim extremists. The Muslim community is no different from any other; there will always be

THE DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING in history and largest terrorist attack since 9/11 was committed by an American citizen in Orlando with a death toll of 49.

those who are violent, but they are by no means representative of an entire population. According to a 2011 Pew Research Center survey, 86% of American Muslims believe the actions of Islamic terrorists are "rarely or never justified." The baseless fears of our highly uneducated nation and Trump's executive order tarnish and disgrace the meaning of Islam.

Trump's actions undermine democracy and shine a negative light on our country that is based on principles of non-discrimination and religious freedom. As a nation with the world's largest military, economy and stockpile of nuclear weapons, blocking refugees who need our help is a severe misuse of power. We are a country who is able and thus obligated to aid those in need. America is a country built by immigrants, and we must not forget this; despite the fact that our country is dependent upon diversity, we have consistently discriminated against various religious and ethnic groups.

In 1891, the largest mass lynching in U.S. history occurred with Italian immigrants as the victims of this great hostility. Not-yet-President Teddy Roosevelt declared the event to be "a rather good thing," while *The New York Times* described the victims as "descendants of bandits and assassins." Strikingly similar is Trump's description of Latino immigrants, in which he stated that "they're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists." Let's also not forget the Chinese Exclusion Act which was passed in 1882 and resulted in an indefinite ban on Chinese immigration until the act was repealed in 1943. Time and time again, we compromise what our nation stands for when we attack minorities. But this is not just a domestic issue; we must also remain cognizant of former discriminatory atrocities such as the Holocaust and Rwandan Genocide. As our nation continues to marginalize the rights of Muslims, we pave the path towards a dark future not unlike these cruelties of the past. We hold a duty to not only remain respectful of others' beliefs, but also promote the concept of tolerance.

Trump's executive order is no longer a matter of Republican or Democratic values, of liberal or conservative beliefs, but rather it is a matter of freedom, justice and equality. Although we may not agree with nor admire one another's political opinions, it is time to set these differences aside to fight for basic rights. This is no longer a domestic fight, but a global one—one that requires us to have courage and stand up for what we believe in. Whether you're fighting for black lives, LGBTQ rights, women's rights, or

EXECUTIVE ORDERS ISSUED PER PRESIDENT

8	GEORGE WASHINGTON
48	ABRAHAM LINCOLN
3,522	FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
346	RICHARD NIXON
291	GEORGE W. BUSH
276	BARACK OBAMA

whatever the social movement you are a part of, we must consolidate to fight back. Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, delivered a lecture in Iowa City on Feb. 6. She stated, "all movements need to join together and unify" to aid the most marginalized. The executive order on immigrants is dangerous and requires action, whether it be participation in peaceful protests, contacting your congressional representatives or even changing your Facebook profile. No matter how you choose to act, let us unify as one nation fighting for the basic concepts our country was founded upon.

PHOTO ON LEFT: Ala Mohamed '17 and Raneem Hamad '17 acknowledge the crowd at an "Anti-Ban" rally in downtown Iowa City after reciting a poem written by Mohamed. Aside from poetry, the rally also featured speeches and music as over 1,500 people gathered in solidarity.

Sources: CNN, National Archives, New America, Pew Research Center & The New York Times
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