

November 21, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned nearly 200 civil and human rights, civil liberties, education, social justice, and inter-faith organizations write to urge your Administration to take immediate action to rescind the regulatory framework behind the National Security Exit-Entry Registration System (NSEERS). The NSEERS program has been found to be ineffective as a counter-terrorism tool, has resulted in tremendous harm for individuals who were directly affected, and has disrupted relationships with immigrant communities.

Created in the wake of September 11, 2001, NSEERS targeted foreign nationals from 25 countries based on religion, ethnicity, and national origin. NSEERS was a discriminatory policy that ran counter to the fundamental American values of fairness and equal protection. Rescinding the regulatory framework of the program will ensure that our nation does not target communities based on national origin and faith in the future.

NSEERS dealt a significant toll on the families and communities directly affected by it. The “call-in registration” part of the program targeted certain males from 25 primarily Arab, Muslim-majority, African, and South Asian countries, as well as North Korea and Eritrea, and required them to appear at local immigration offices for fingerprinting and interrogations.

In the wake of NSEERS, more than 13,000 men who complied with the program faced deportation charges. Families were torn apart, small businesses in immigrant neighborhoods closed their doors, and students discarded their educational aspirations. One person affected by NSEERS was Mr. D, a 19-year-old athlete from Algeria who came to the United States on a student visa to play tennis at Western Michigan University. As a foreign student, Mr. D was subject to NSEERS as a condition for study in the United States. Due to a car accident, Mr. D complied with NSEERS one day past the deadline. Although medical documents were available to show the circumstances of the one-day delay, the local immigration office charged Mr. D with failure to comply with NSEERS and placed him in removal proceedings. Mr. D’s story is just one of tens of thousands of people affected by NSEERS.

Government officials have questioned whether the NSEERS program was an effective tool to combat terrorism. James W. Ziglar, former commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, has asked: “The question was, ‘[w]hat were we going to get for all of this? The people who could be identified as terrorists weren’t going to show up. This project was a huge exercise and caused us to use resources in the field that could have been much better deployed.’”

In April 2011, the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) took a positive step by de-listing the countries under the NSEERS program. This development confirmed that “DHS seeks to identify specific individuals and actions that pose specific threats, rather than focusing on more general designations of groups of individuals, such as country of origin.” Intending to discontinue the NSEERS program, the de-listing notice stated firmly “DHS will no longer register aliens under NSEERS effective on April 28, 2011.”

Nevertheless, the regulatory structure for NSEERS remains intact. As organizations that represent diverse communities and that are committed to civil and immigrant rights, we firmly believe that removal of the NSEERS framework is a necessary imperative. We ask the Administration to immediately take steps to remove the regulatory structure of NSEERS and stop any future use of the program.

Thank you for your attention. We look forward to hearing from you. For additional information, or to schedule a meeting, please contact Mr. Abed Ayoub of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), [aayoub@adc.org](mailto:aayoub@adc.org), or at 202-244-2990.

Sincerely,

18 Million Rising  
Adelante Alabama Worker Center  
Advancement Project  
Advocates for Youth  
African American Ministers in Action (AAMIA)  
African Services Committee, Inc.  
Alianza Americas  
Alliance of South Asians Taking Action (ASATA)  
America's Voice Education Fund  
American Center for Outreach  
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)  
American Immigration Council  
American Muslim Advisory Council

Anti-Defamation League (ADL)  
API Equality - Northern California (APIENC)  
Arab American Association of New York (AAANY)  
Arab American Institute (AAI)  
Arkansas United Community Coalition  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)  
Asian American Psychological Association  
Asian American Writers' Workshop  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice- Asian Law Caucus  
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance & Institute for Asian Pacific American  
Leadership and Advancement  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Austin Jewish Voice for Peace  
Black Alliance for Just Immigration  
Brooklyn Defender Services  
Casa Esperanza  
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.  
Center for American Progress  
Center for APA Women  
Center for Community Change  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Center for New Community  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Center for Social Inclusion  
Center for Sustainable Justice  
Chinatown Community Center of Detroit  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Refugee & Immigration Ministries  
Church World Service  
Common Defense  
Communities for Just Schools Fund  
Community Health Consulting Services  
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto  
Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC)  
Compassionate Fremont  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)  
Council on American-Islamic Relations Greater Los Angeles Area  
Dar al Hijrah Islamic Center  
DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
DC-Maryland Justice for Our Neighbors

Detention Watch Network  
Dreamers Moms  
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving  
Durango Unido en Chicago  
El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos  
EmergeUSA  
Fair Immigration Reform Movement  
Families for freedom  
Farmworker Justice  
Fellowship of Reconciliation  
Florida Coastal School of Law Immigrant and Human Rights Clinic  
Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC)  
Franciscan Action Network  
Free Migration Project  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees  
Georgia Muslim Voter Project  
Global One to One  
Global Ties ABQ  
HIAS  
HIAS Pennsylvania  
Human Rights First  
Human Rights Initiative of North Texas  
IABAT (Islamic Ahlul Bayt Association of the Triangle)  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
Imam Hussain Islamic Center  
Immigrant and Refugee Resource Village of Albuquerque  
Immigrant Defense Project  
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project  
Immigrant Legal Resource Center  
Immigrant Rights Clinic of Washington Square Legal Services  
Immigration Center for Women and Children  
Interfaith Committee for Detained Immigrants  
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity  
Iranian American Bar Association  
Islamic Education Center, Potomac, MD  
Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center  
Jakara Movement  
Japan America Society of New Mexico, Inc.  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP)  
Jews for Racial & Economic Justice  
Justice Strategies

Korean Resource Center  
Laotian American National Alliance  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
Long Island Immigrant Alliance  
Lutheran Family Services  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
Make the Road New York  
Mi Familia Vota  
Military Religious Freedom Foundation  
MoveOn Civic Action  
MPower Change  
Muslim Advocates  
Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity  
Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC)  
Muslim Bar Association of Southern California  
Muslim Community Center of Chicago  
Muslim Community Network  
Muslim Justice League  
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)  
NAFSA: Association of International Educators  
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association  
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse  
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development  
(CAPACD)  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms  
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of La Raza  
National Employment Law Project  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Immigration Forum  
National Immigration Law Center (NILC)  
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild  
National Iranian American Council (NIAC)  
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)  
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
National Organization for Women (NOW)  
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance

National Religious Campaign Against Torture  
NC Stop Torture Now  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New Mexico Asian Family Center  
New Mexico Women's Global Pathways  
Next Wave Muslim Initiative  
North Carolina Justice Center  
Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors  
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project  
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates  
OneAmerica  
Pangea Legal Services  
Pars Equality Center  
Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center  
Pioneer Valley Progressive Muslims  
Progressive Interfaith Alliance  
Project South  
Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA)  
Quaker House of Fayetteville NC  
Race Forward  
Reformed Church of Highland Park  
Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)  
Refugee Well-being Project  
Restore The Fourth  
RootsAction.org  
Salvadoran American National Network (SANN)  
Service Employees International Union  
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN)  
Sisters of Mercy South Central Community  
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)  
South Asian Bar Association  
South Asian Network (SAN)  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
Southeast Immigrant Rights Network  
Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)  
STAND: The Student-led Movement to End Mass Atrocities  
St. John United Church of Christ  
Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice  
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights  
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition  
The Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

The Sikh Coalition  
Triangle Chapter Women's International League for Peace & Freedom  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois  
United Voices for America  
UPLIFT  
VietUnity - Bay Area  
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights  
Washington Peace Center  
WeCount!  
Women's Refugee Commission  
X-Lab

Ms. Margo Schlanger - former DHS Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties  
(affiliation listed for informational purposes only)  
Ms. Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia - Samuel Weiss Faculty Scholar and Clinical  
Professor of Law, Penn State Law: University Park (affiliation listed for  
informational purposes only)

cc: Jeh Johnson, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security

Coalition