

## **Public Response to Presidential Executive Order**

As an academic organization, NASSS exists to promote, stimulate and encourage the sociological study of play, games, sport and contemporary physical culture. That is our stated mission and as sociologists and affiliated scholars, we recognize that physical culture in its various forms does not happen in a social vacuum. Recently, the political and cultural zeitgeist within the United States has created a context of anxiety and concern.

On January 27, 2017, Holocaust Remembrance Day, President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order which banned entry of people into the United States from the Sudan, Iraq, Iran, Libya, the Yemen and Somalia for 90 days. It places an indefinite ban on people from Syria and halts the entry for all refugees for 120 days. Right now, there is a temporary stay on some parts of this ban due to legal action, with many more court cases being filed at the time of this writing. While we carefully watch how the cases proceed and how events unfold, we are nonetheless troubled by this cruel and capricious Executive Order and the anxiety induced for the targeted people, some of whom are members of our own academic community, both narrowly defined within NASSS and also our fellow sociologists of sport from around the world, and on our home campuses.

Moreover, in the Executive Order it makes clear that these targeted seven countries are meant to represent the commencement of a much longer-term imposition of sanctions against those from predominantly Muslim countries: "After the 60-day period described in subsection (d) of this section expires, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall submit to the President a list of countries recommended for inclusion on a Presidential proclamation that would prohibit the entry of foreign nationals from countries that do not provide the information requested pursuant to subsection (d) of this section until compliance occurs. (f) At any point after submitting the list described in subsection (e) of this section, the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security may submit to the President the names of any additional countries recommended for similar treatment."

As an academic association, we stand against discrimination of all forms, particularly as they are structured into our laws and policies, as is the case with this order, and with steadfast resolve we stand against this ban and the threat of its expansion. Moreover, we recognize and stand against the limits placed on the free and open scholarly exchange of ideas that happens when people from around the world meet together, at institutions of higher learning and at academic conferences. This ban, and the intention behind it, are threats to that academic inquiry and stifles collaboration among academics.

We encourage anyone in the NASSS community who is affected by this Executive Order to contact members of the NASSS Executive Board, so that we can work with you to provide the support that you need to participate in NASSS, including the annual conference.

We also encourage all members of the NASSS community to engage with their local elected officials to highlight the ways this ban impacts academic freedom. Our full engagement at our home campuses, local communities and to the extent that we are able, at the national level remains important. While this particular Executive Order is happening in the United States, the Islamophobia and underlying current of white supremacy is, unfortunately, an ideology with long historical global impact.

As an organization, we will continue to strive to create an inclusive scholarly community where the exchange of ideas across many forms of diversity makes us stronger and more fully informed. We believe in free intellectual inquiry among all scholars irrespective of religion, nationality or political viewpoints, and to this end we would strongly encourage attendance at our next conference to be held in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, from November 1-5, 2017. We are pleased to be in Canada this year, as many may see travel into the United States as supporting leadership and ideologies to which they are directly opposed. However, we also recognize the challenges and personal sacrifices this may present to those who may face difficulties returning to the US.

While simply attending a conference may not seem a particularly “political” statement for many of us, the respectful and free exchange of ideas within this inclusive environment should be recognized as a statement of academic freedom at this time, amidst the rising tide of nationalism, xenophobia and prejudiced rhetoric in the US and elsewhere. We shall remain vigilant to the spread of ignorance and fear, and work towards the creation of a safe and welcoming academic environment for all NASSS scholars.

Respectfully,

The NASSS Executive Board

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