

ASTMH Urges Reversal of President Trump's Executive Order on Immigration and Refugees

Unintended Consequences Too Risky for Global Health

Oakbrook Terrace, Ill. (February 1, 2017)—The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH), the largest international scientific organization of experts dedicated to reducing the worldwide burden of tropical infectious diseases and improving global health, calls on President Donald Trump to rescind his current ban that bars certain immigrants and refugees from entering the United States.

Barring people from the United States due to their country of origin has unexpected consequences, include weakening the infrastructure needed to protect all people from tropical infectious diseases. Tropical medicine and global health research, education and clinical care are all negatively impacted by this ban. The health of many legal immigrants and refugees already in the United States is negatively impacted by this ban as well.

Members of our Society understand that health and science are global issues that require scientists from many different countries to work together. In order to accomplish this collaborative effort, students and career scientists come to the United States to further their knowledge, conduct research, and participate in scientific conferences in the search for solutions to tropical infectious diseases that affect citizens of all countries, including the United States. Academic exchange in tropical medicine and global health is by its very nature based on bilateral exchange; travel is critical to progress.

On the refugee ban specifically, maintaining established U.S. policy toward human migration and global health that upholds the value of compassion, as well as key principles in international human rights law is essential. Many organizations consider the current U.S. refugee resettlement program to already be a model for "extreme vetting," both from a security and public health standpoint.

We call on the President and Congress to make policy decisions based on evidence and not fear, appreciating that wholesale discrimination based primarily on geography or religion will have little to no effect in securing our world against disease threats.

When it comes to health, there are no borders. The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene will continue to work with the U.S. Congress, the White House, and global health stakeholders in support of [evidence-based policies and programs](#) to protect the health of people inside and outside the United States. This will require national and international collaboration. Let us take this Executive Order as our call to action as a global health community to convene, collaborate and work to solve the disease problems that can affect us all.

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