



Asian American Psychological Association Statement Against Xenophobic Travel Ban
Date: July 2, 2018

The Asian American Psychological Association stands firmly opposed to xenophobic policies that persecute people based solely on their religious beliefs. We continue to stand by the [statement](#) we made on December 16, 2015 against anti-Muslim rhetoric and violence.

For many people and communities, religion and spirituality are important components of psychological and community health that need to be protected. The U.S. has a long standing history of anti-Asian and anti-religion laws and policies from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII, and proposals to ban Catholic immigrants into the U.S. during the 19th and 20th centuries. Since 9/11 and the 2016 Presidential election, there has been an increased wave of hate crimes linked to Islamophobia and many Muslim and South Asian Americans have been targets of violence and hatred.

As individuals in marginalized communities are exposed to prejudice, racism, and discrimination related to threats to their safety, stigmas against their religion, and fear of deportation and family separation, they may be affected by acute race-related stress, trauma, and negative physical and mental health. We encourage AAPA members to raise your individual and collective voices against hate and to stand with our Muslim siblings who are being targeted in the current climate of fear and hatred. We ask you to reach out and check in with colleagues, friends, neighbors, students, and family.

To our Muslim siblings and membership, we stand with you. We believe in and fight for religious freedom. We support your efforts to take care of yourself and your community during this difficult time. As Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor writes, The United States of America is a Nation built upon the promise of religious liberty. Our Founders honored that core promise by embedding the principle of religious neutrality in the First Amendment. The Court's decision today fails to safeguard that fundamental principle."