



کانون وکلای ایرانی در آمریکا

IRANIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Promised Travel Ban Waivers Never Delivered, As State Department Statistics Reveal Complete Travel Ban in Effect

Dear Members and Friends,

As many of you know, a coalition of Iranian-American organizations, including the Iranian American Bar Association (IABA), Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA), and the Pars Equality Center, along with their legal counsel, worked with the offices of Senators Chris Van Hollen and Jeff Flake in seeking an explanation on the "waiver provisions" outlined in the Presidential Proclamation 9645 (the Proclamation) also known as Travel Ban 3.0. As a result of those [efforts](#) by IABA, PAAIA, Pars Equality, and their legal counsel, the State Department recently released a [clarification letter](#) on how the waivers are being processed. In response, today, the coalition released the following joint statement regarding the State Department's "clarification letter":

"As Iranian American civil rights and advocacy organizations, we are extremely concerned with the State Department's response to Senators Chris Van Hollen and Jeff Flake's request that the administration provide information on the criteria, policies, and procedures for the waivers authorized under the Proclamation.

As a result of the Proclamation, all but 2 visas out of 6,555 waiver applications have been denied between December 8th and February 15th. Reuters recently [reported](#) that some limited additional waivers have been approved since February 15th (though this information has not been confirmed by the State Department). Consular officers rarely, if ever, accept visa applicants' waiver packets and supporting documents, thereby leaving no reason to believe that waivers are being appropriately adjudicated pursuant to the Proclamation. The State Department appears to have failed to implement key provisions of the

Proclamation that are intended to provide relief to individuals from affected countries.

The response letter also provides vague descriptions of the already ambiguous criteria set for assessment of waivers. In addition, the wholesale rejection of waiver requests compels the conclusion that there is a complete travel ban in effect by the administration. Over 8406 people from the affected countries filed visa applications, traveled long distances at great expense to go through the charade of a visa interview. With what appears to be a 3 out of 10,000 chance of overcoming all the hurdles to get to a visa to travel, one can only ask why visa interviews are being scheduled at all.

We respectfully request a meeting with appropriate representatives at the Department of State and Department of Homeland Security to discuss the implementation of the "waiver" program in fuller detail."

PAAIA, IABA, and Pars Equality Center are committed to protecting the civil liberties of Iranian Americans and will continue to advocate against the discriminatory travel ban. The three organizations along with over 25 individual plaintiffs are also challenging President Trump's latest iteration of the travel and refugee bans in Federal court.

The brief and declarations on the Iranian American organization federal lawsuit can be found at www.endthetravelban.com.

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