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JCRC of Greater Washington Strongly Opposes Executive Orders on Refugees

WASHINGTON, DC –Today, it is widely expected that President Donald Trump will announce a number of executive orders, including ones seeking to shut America’s door to many refugees. The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington has issued a statement in strong opposition to these expected actions:

“President Donald Trump’s expected order to restrict many tens of thousands of helpless refugees from seeking safety in America, and also barring visas from being issued to anyone from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, betrays the Jewish and American values we cherish. This shouldn’t be a partisan or political issue, welcoming refugees is part of what has truly made America great.

“Our nation has a centuries-long tradition of opening its shores to the oppressed. The Torah teaches, ‘You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.’ Our history as Jews, and of repeatedly fleeing persecution, makes us sensitive to and compassionate for those who suffer similar fates and experiences and we believe that refugees should be treated with compassion and dignity. The Jewish community must make our voice heard and stand up for our values.

“Further, our compassion also must recognize the realities of living in a dangerous world. The overwhelming majority of refugees seeking entry to the United States are innocent bystanders whose lives have been uprooted by conflict in the Middle East and we, as Americans and as global leaders, must find a way to protect them. Of course, living in a post-9/11 world means that we must continue applying the already stringent background checks now being performed on every refugee who seeks entry to the United States as a way to guard against terrorists who may seek to exploit the refugee crisis to obtain similar admission to the United States.

“Times of upheaval and distress can often bring out the worst in human nature. Policies like the ones President Trump is expected to announce today can only fan the flames of baseless hatred toward refugees and immigrants, and we reject them. Faced with largest refugee crisis of our time, the United States must continue to be a beacon of freedom and safety for people fleeing religious persecution, genocide and terror. We will fight these new policies with everything we’ve got.”

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