



Trump's Immigration Policy

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President Trump has made sweeping changes to American immigration policy, with actions taken to address immigration from Mexico as well as the refugee process from Muslim majority nations. Our piece on Mexican immigration and the border wall can be found [here](#), though analysis of decreased immigration into Michigan will aggregate the effects of both policies at times.

On January 27 President Trump issued an executive order that would suspend the US refugee program for a 120 day period, with a 90 day travel ban to the US from countries seen as “terror hot spots”. These countries are Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and Sudan are all countries with a Muslim majority, although the list excludes other majority Muslim countries that Trump has business interests in. In addition to the 120 day halt, all those coming from Syria are to be banned indefinitely. While the order has faced push back from the international community as well as Americans, human rights groups, and lawyers, President Trump has defended it by comparing it to the Obama administration's slowdown of Iraqi relocation into the US in 2011. Said Trump in his statement on the executive order: “My policy is similar to what President Obama did in 2011 when he banned visas for refugees from Iraq for six months”.

In truth, this current action is unlike Obama's 2011 reform or anything that America has had in the past. To contextualize the 2011 order that the President is referring to, we must understand “the Kentucky case”. In May 2011 two Iraqis living in Kentucky were arrested under

federal terrorism charges. One of them, Waad Ramadan Alwan, had had his fingerprints found by the FBI on a phone that had been wired to detonate a bomb on a roadside in Iraq in 2005. Alwan had been a refugee, and Congress was concerned about the process of asylum in the US. In response, the Obama administration remanded 58,000 Iraqi refugee records, and imposed a more extensive background checks for Iraqi resettlement into the US. Media at the time focused on the slowed visa approvals as the US ended its involvement in the Iraq War. While State Department records reflect a significant decrease in the arrivals of refugees in 2011(18,251 in 2010, 6,339 in 2011 and 16,369 in 2012), this was the unintended effect of a logjam caused by the re-checking of and re-vetting process, as well as some having to reapply as their applications expired in the process. This was an administrative reaction to a direct incident, while Trump's refugee ban is not.

Secondly, this new order caps the number of refugee entries at 50,000 compared to Obama's 110,000, while making the process for those 50,000 much more difficult. It suspends the Visa Interview Waiver Program, which had allowed some applicants who were only seeking to renew temporary visas to be exempt from personal interviews, as decided by the consular officers. Furthermore, despite White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus' saying that the new regulations would not impact on green card holders (permanent residents), he said later in a Meet the Press interview that they could be subject to greater questioning at the airport. As was seen almost immediately after the order was issued, people were held at airports, with anecdotes of long-time residents returning home from vacation being detained. There were also several reports of security demanding social media accounts from those held at the airport so that they could be scrutinized for any perceived threat.

The pushback has been tremendous. Following a case filed by the ACLU over the 100-200 people being detained at airports, a federal judge has placed a temporary halt on deportation of those being held who are visa holders or refugees. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act made it so that no person can be "discriminated against in the issuance of an

immigrant visa because of the person's race, sex, nationality, place of birth or place of residence", which could be cited in court to oppose the ban placed on all Syrians. However, supporters of the ban could point to former President Carter's sidestep of this law in 1980 when he barred Iranians following the hostage crisis in Tehran. They could also point to the 1952 "Inadmissible Aliens" Law which allows the state to "suspend the entry" of "any class of aliens" that are found by the president to be a risk to the US.

On a local level, the order also states that so-called "sanctuary cities" will lose their federal funding if they continue to be a refuge to undocumented residents. What does this mean for Michigan? Currently, Detroit and Ann Arbor share a reputation for being sanctuary cities, and Lansing is in talks of joining them. This means that these cities have local policies that limit law enforcement's involvement in federal immigration matters. City Council member, Chuck Warpehoski resists the term, which implies, he says, that his city of Ann Arbor is hiding undocumented immigrants. "It promises more than our policy delivers," he says, explaining that the policy is an anti-profiling resolution that was approved by City Council in 2003 in reaction to the U.S. Patriot Act, which council members saw as a threat to civil rights. Several local leaders support maintaining the title of being a sanctuary city. "Federal money flows in so many ways that it's hard to understand what the federal government would do if they followed up on the rhetoric of not funding sanctuary cities," says Howard Lazarus, Ann Arbor City Administrator. Ann Arbor received \$1.4 million in federal funding during the 2015-2016 fiscal year which was spent on initiatives such as safe drinking water projects, housing programs, law enforcement and more. Lazarus believes it is unlikely that the federal government would go after such funds from a smaller city like his. If they do decide to make a city like Ann Arbor choose, Warpehoski worries that the lack of sanctuary policies will make witnesses as well as victims of crimes less likely to reach out to law enforcement because of their immigration status. Meanwhile in Lansing, talks surrounding sanctuary city status have been redirected by this order. A vote will take place February 13 on whether or not to join Ann Arbor and Detroit. If Lansing does in fact

became a sanctuary city, and the Trump administration does withhold federal funding, the city would lose \$6.5 million. At-Large Council Member, Kathie Dunbar supports the move, stating: "I don't care about that six million bucks because I don't think (Trump) is going to do it." Mayor Bernardo shares this sentiment, and sent out a written statement that if the Trump administration does try to force the new order on Lansing, he would be willing to go against them: "We will resist. We are not turning our America over to you, Mr. President. This is the United States of America, not the United States of Trump".

The ban alone triggered warnings from many experts on the effects it would have on the Michigan economy. "It's not so much this is going to throw our economy into recession. But long term, it hurts our competitiveness in the world economy," says Tim Bartik, a senior economist at the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. MLive explains 5 potential unintended consequences [here](#) which highlight the risk to employer's ability to recruit skilled employees from other countries, higher education institution's ability to recruit international students, the likelihood of those students remaining in Michigan to work after graduation, the number of entrepreneurs and of the work needed to uphold Michigan's agriculture industry.

Two weeks ago, Governor Rick Snyder spoke at his State of the State address about his goals to increase Michigan's population to 10 million by 2020 while attracting highly skilled workers. He as well as his economic development director, the Detroit Regional Chamber; top management at Ford and General Motors, and the Michigan Farm Bureau are opposed the effects that Trump's action will have on our state. The presidential order has many wondering what will happen next to their families, to their state, and on a larger scale, to their country.