



**Joint Statement on the Executive Order issued on January 27th, 2017, entitled
“Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States”**

MIT Undergraduate Association, MIT Graduate Student Council, and
MIT Postdoctoral Association

The executive order entitled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States” was signed by President Trump on Jan. 27, 2017 to impose a temporary halt on the admission of foreigners from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen into the US. The issued order not only pertains to visas currently being processed, but more broadly impacts individuals who are citizens, nationals, or were born in these seven countries, even if they are already visa holders. In particular, this expansive category includes students, researchers, and faculty on class F, J, H, and other visas.

The MIT Graduate Student Council, MIT Undergraduate Association, and MIT Postdoctoral Association collectively represent over 12,800 students and postdoctoral scholars. We strongly support all measures that enable international students and scholars enrolled or employed at accredited US universities, including MIT, to obtain visas to work or study in the US and to enter and leave the US freely during the course of their work and studies. We also strongly support the protection of the rights of all students and scholars regardless of religion or national or ethnic origin.

The Executive Order issued by the President directly affects at least 115 students and scholars enrolled or working at MIT. Effective immediately, it prevents these students and scholars from entering or reentering the country for a minimum of 90 days and possibly indefinitely, despite already having secured visas and having passed the rigorous background checks required by the visa application and renewal processes. We are deeply disappointed to see our friends and colleagues perceived as a threat to national security--a perception that could not be further from reality.

The students and scholars affected by this Executive Order are brilliant young women and men here to study and conduct research. The researchers and faculty affected by this Executive Order are our collaborators and mentors. They will no longer have the opportunity to attend international conferences to present their work and to represent our institution abroad, nor will they be able to visit family members or attend celebrations in their home countries. If they were

outside the United States at the time that the Executive Order was signed, they may not be able to return for the spring semester.

The President's Executive Order will directly reduce American academic competitiveness and prestige. Since the students, researchers, and faculty affected cannot travel freely, they cannot present high quality American research to the world. Furthermore, even if the halt in entry from these countries is only temporary, the issued Executive Order sends an irrevocable signal to foreign students and scholars intending to come the US, which will likely decrease our ability to attract and retain global talent and to seek global collaborations. This trend will hinder innovation in both academia and industry, hampering our national economic competitiveness.^{i ii}

For these reasons, we urge President Trump to immediately revoke this Executive Order, we urge Congress to strengthen the protections from discrimination specified in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, and we urge the Courts to enforce the protections that are already in place. It is imperative to restore equal opportunity for current and future international students and scholars to thrive and learn and continue using their full talent to positively contribute to American society, at MIT and across the United States.

ⁱ Richard B. Freeman and Wei Huang. "Collaborating With People Like Me: Ethnic co-authorship within the US." *National Bureau of Economic Research*, February 2014.

ⁱⁱ Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, and Sara Prince. "Diversity matters." *McKinsey&Company*. February 2015.