



The No Ban Act

Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President

I made a visit to Senator Portman's office recently. It was an opportunity to ask him to support HR 2214, known as the No Ban Act. With me on the visit were Peter Makari, Area Coordinator for our mission partners in Europe and the Middle East, and Karen Georgia Thompson, Associate General Minister of the United Church of Christ. Also joining us were three members of the Council for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). One of the three was Siti, a law clerk who works in their offices.

It is her story I want to share with you, with her permission.

Siti has two children. She was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and is a U.S. citizen. She is soon to finish her studies in law school and will take her bar exam shortly after that. Her family is from Yemen. Her husband's parents still live in Yemen and have never met their grandchildren. After going through all the screening required by our government, they were ready to leave to meet their grandchildren for the first time two years ago. The day they were to leave, the President issued what is now known as the Muslim Ban.

Over two years later, Siti's children still have never met their grandparents.

What is the so-called "Muslim Ban"?

Executive Order 13769, issued on January 27, 2017, lowered the number of refugees admitted into the U.S. to 50,000 (down from 125,000 previously) and, among other actions, banned entry of any applicants from Iran, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. Sally Yates, acting Attorney General at the time, refused to comply with the order and was fired for her stand on this. Two separate court rulings declared the ban unconstitutional. A third iteration of the ban, Executive Order 13780, was issued on March 6, 2017. It was ruled by the Supreme Court in a 5-4 split decision to be within the authority of the President.

The No Ban Act, submitted in April of this year by Judy Chu (D – CA), clarifies the President’s authority and limits the President to actions that are not based solely on race or religion as a motivation for denying entry to the U.S.

Siti’s story demonstrates that the current ban is directly affecting U.S. citizens.

As members of the United Church of Christ, we believe strongly that one’s religion should not affect their ability to take advantage of all the resources provided by our country. Refugees from predominantly black and Muslim countries should not be singled out by our government and refused entry into the U.S. This ban, currently in effect, has a deep and profound affect on the lives of many, including a young law clerk here in Cleveland whose children have still never met their grandparents.

I invite you to learn more about the No Ban Act and to write your representatives and ask them to support HR 2214. The practice of our Christian faith, and our belief in the American dream, serve as clear motivation for taking this small step for justice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer is General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ

LEARN ucc.org/justice

DONATE ucc.org/donate

ARCHIVE
WFJ bit.ly/witness4justice

The United Church of Christ has more than 5,000 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.