*"You must not oppress foreigners. You know what it's like to be a foreigner, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt*."

   - Exodus 23:9

     The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County condemns the recent Executive actions of President Donald J. Trump against refugees and Muslims in particular.  This kind of Executive Order is contrary to human decency, violating the human and moral rights of all people to seek safety and security.  It also runs contrary to our Nation's struggle to be a respected beacon of hope and a safe haven for people who are threatened by war, hunger or persecution.  To single out Muslims is dangerous to the safety and well-being of all citizens.

     The rhetoric of President Trump over the past year has endangered the lives of Muslims not only in the United States but across the world.  Such rhetoric emboldens terrorist groups and individuals.  Unscrupulous people will be tempted to engage in aggressive action or vandalism against innocent people and houses of worship because of their religious affiliation.  Associating all of Islam with terrorism and then suspecting all Muslims because of their religion cannot be allowed to stand.

     The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County stands in solidarity with the Muslim Community throughout the world.  We call upon the President to rescind his Executive Order against Refugees and Muslims and to ensure that such tactics will not be entertained in the future.  We call upon Congress and the Courts to block any implementation of this dangerous Executive Order or any like it.

     It is simply irresponsible and life threatening to single out a particular religion and people for such Executive action.  The President's Executive Order contravenes our most precious constitutional values of equal protection and due process, and ignores their cherished principles of anti-discriminatory development of remedies and evidence-based decision making.  We are further concerned since most, if not all, of the would-be refugee entrants have already undergone two years or more of careful screening and comprehensive vetting under the well-established protocols of the last two administrations. Yet the Executive Order would allow individual agents at the port of entry to exercise their own discretion in selectively denying what has already been approved.

     We are deeply concerned about those refugees who are fleeing dangerous situations to find a safe haven in America.  President Trump's plan does not respond to the severity of the global refugee problem and must not destroy the aspirations of so many who look to us for hope.  We are appalled and saddened the President would act in such a manner as this, as it betrays even those with permanent residency rights in the U.S. and divides families around the world.  Xenophobia and Islamophobia must not be the basis for legislation or Executive Orders.   We call upon the Interfaith Community to stand in solidarity with one another and the Muslim Community as we honor the founding principles upon which this country has been built and seek peace through justice and the welcoming of strangers.

Signed,

The Governing Board of the

Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County