



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

March 10, 2020

Dear Member of Congress,

As bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), a denomination of 3.5 million people of faith, we call on you to work together and pass the National Origin-Based Antidiscrimination for Nonimmigrants Act (NO BAN Act) to ensure that no one is denied entrance to the United States based on religious or nationality-based discrimination.

On Jan. 31, the administration issued Executive Order 13769, extending the ban on travel to the United States from seven majority-Muslim countries to 13. The new ban suspends the issuing of immigrant visas, which can lead to permanent residency, to those from Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Nigeria, as well as visas available through the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program lottery to applicants from Sudan and Tanzania who otherwise would not be allowed to emigrate to the United States.

These actions concern us as individual Christians and as leaders in church and society. As ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton expressed in a recent pastoral letter on this matter, “This expanded policy separates families from loved ones already here. Further, it prevents people — especially those escaping perilous or life-threatening situations in several of these nations — from coming to safety in the U.S. It does not enhance our safety or reflect our vocation as Christians.”

The expansion of this policy reflects racial and religious discrimination. Federal courts have recognized this already by blocking significant portions of the ban, finding them discriminatory, anti-Muslim or unconstitutional. Concern for the well-being of others lies at the very heart of Christian faith, and these bans contradict our church’s and our nation’s commitments to be a place of welcome and safety for others.

We ask God to guide our nation in ending all forms of religious and racial discrimination and to promote our commitments to pluralism and welcome. To that end, we ask for your decisive action to pass the NO BAN Act. Thank you for your service in Congress and to our nation.

Sincerely,

1. The Rev. Abraham D. Allende, Bishop
Northeastern Ohio Synod
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
2. The Rev. Jon Anderson, Bishop
Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Redwood Falls, Minn.

3. The Rev. Jim Arends, Bishop
La Crosse Area Synod
La Crosse, Wis.
4. The Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew, Bishop
New Jersey Synod
Hamilton Square, N.J.
5. The Rev. Susan J. Briner, Bishop
Southwestern Texas Synod
Seguin, Texas
6. The Rev. Laurie Larson Caesar, Bishop
Oregon Synod
Portland, Ore.
7. The Rev. Susan Candea, Bishop
Central States Synod
Kansas City, Mo.
8. The Rev. H. Jeffrey A. Clements, Bishop
Northern Illinois Synod
Rockford, Ill.
9. Rev. Yehiel Curry, Bishop
Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Chicago, Ill.
10. The Rev. Patricia Davenport, Bishop
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Philadelphia, Pa.
11. The Rev. Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt, Bishop
Southern Ohio Synod
Columbus, Ohio
12. The Rev. James S. Dunlop
Lower Susquehanna Synod
Harrisburg, Pa.
13. The Rev. Paul Egensteiner, Bishop
Metropolitan New York Synod
New York, N.Y.
14. The Rev. Paul D. Erickson, Bishop

Greater Milwaukee Synod
Milwaukee, Wis.

15. The Rev. R. Guy Erwin, Ph.D., Bishop
Southwest California Synod
Glendale, Calif.
16. The Rev. Katherine Finegan, Bishop
Northern Great Lakes Synod
Marquette, Mich.
17. The Rev. Dr. William O. Gafkjen, Bishop
Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Indianapolis, Ind.
18. The Rev. Michael K. Girlinghouse, Bishop
Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod
Tulsa, Okla.
19. The Rev. William (Bill) Gohl, Jr., Bishop
Delaware-Maryland Synod
Baltimore, Md.
20. The Rev. Jim Gonia, Bishop
Rocky Mountain Synod
Denver, Colo.
21. The Rev. James Hazelwood, Bishop
New England Synod
Worcester, Mass.
22. The Rev. Mark W. Holmerud, Bishop
Sierra Pacific Synod
Sacramento, Calif.
23. The Rev. Robert F. Humphrey, Bishop
Virginia Synod
Salem, Va.
24. The Rev. Deborah K. Hutterer, Bishop
Grand Canyon Synod
Phoenix, Ariz.
25. The Rev. Patricia Lull, Bishop
Saint Paul Area Synod
St. Paul, Minn.

26. The Rev. Brian Maas, Bishop
Nebraska Synod
Omaha, Neb.
27. The Rev. John S. Macholz, Bishop
Upstate New York Synod
East Syracuse, N.Y.
28. The Rev. Gerald L Mansholt, Bishop
East-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Appleton, Wis.
29. The Rev. Leila M. Ortiz, Bishop
Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod
Washington, D.C.
30. The Rev. Michael Rinehart, Bishop
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Houston, Texas
31. The Rev. Peter Rogness, Bishop
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis.
32. The Rev. S. John Roth, Bishop
Central/Southern Illinois Synod
33. The Rev. Craig A. Satterlee, Ph. D., Bishop
North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Flint, Mich.
34. The Rev. Laurie Skow-Anderson, Bishop
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Chetek, Wis.
35. The Rev. Kevin L. Strickland, Bishop
Southeastern Synod
Atlanta, Ga.
36. The Rev. Pedro Suarez, Bishop
Florida-Bahamas Synod
Tampa, Fla.
37. Rev. Ann Svennungsen, Bishop
Minneapolis Area Synod

Minneapolis, Minn.

38. The Rev. Andrew A. Taylor, Bishop
Pacifica Synod
Santa Ana, Calif.
39. The Rev. Bill Tesch, Bishop
Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Moorhead, Minn.
40. The Rev. Steven Ullestad, Bishop
Northeastern Iowa Synod
Waverly, Iowa
41. The Rev. Shelley Wickstrom, Bishop
Alaska Synod
Anchorage, Alaska
42. The Rev. Lawrence Wohlrabe, Interim Bishop
Eastern North Dakota Synod
Fargo, N.D.
43. The Rev. Herman R. Yoos, Bishop
South Carolina Synod
Columbia, S.C.
44. The Rev. Samuel R. Zeiser, Bishop
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Allentown, Pa.