

# MSCF Minute



An electronic publication of the Minnesota State College Faculty

## MSCF Minute Special Edition-A Message From AFT

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*We receive multiple communications from AFT each week on a variety of topics. There would likely be a point where it would be counterproductive to forward all of them to you. For your reference, we will now begin posting all of them on our [blog](#).*

*The message below is too important not to receive special attention. I realize the partisan nature of it may create some concerns. In my opinion, however, what is simply right transcends those concerns.*

*-Kevin Lindstrom*

Dear AFT members and allies,

In his first week in office, President Trump began implementing his campaign promise to target refugees and immigrants. On Friday, Jan. 27, Trump signed an executive order that effectively prohibits the entry into the United States of Muslim citizens of seven countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The order affects approximately 25,000 people holding student and work visas, and as many as 500,000 people who are permanent legal residents of the United States. And it comes days after an order threatening to withhold federal funds from the more than 300 U.S. cities

that have declared themselves sanctuaries for our immigrant students and members and their families. Trump also took action on building a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico.

Trump's orders will harm many AFT members and millions of our students, patients, families, friends and neighbors. We—our country and our union—are better than this. We are writing not simply to make the AFT's opposition to the orders clear, but to provide information to assist affected members and those we serve, and to give you resources with which to fight this outrageous abuse of power.

### AFT's position on the executive orders

These executive orders violate the moral and political direction established by AFT resolutions on immigration and refugees reaching back for several decades. In addition, many informed observers believe that these orders are counterproductive to the president's supposed rationale—to protect the country. We oppose Trump's orders, the racist and xenophobic logic that underlies them, the havoc they have created in the lives of those affected, and the damage they have done to America's standing in the

world and to our national security.

Like many of you, over the last several days [we have been actively involved in protesting the orders](#). Many of you live and work in communities that have aided in the resettlement of refugees fleeing grave conflicts abroad. We are grateful for the work you have done, as individuals and as AFT affiliates, to make refugee students, parents, patients and community members feel at home in this country. And we are appalled by these executive orders and the harm they will do to the trust you have built through this work. Some reading this are visa holders or permanent legal residents of the United States from one of the countries targeted in Trump's orders. We are proud to have you as our brothers and sisters in this union, and we will stand with you shoulder to shoulder in the days ahead.

### What to do if you are affected

If you, a co-worker, a family member or a member of your community is affected by these executive orders, we want to know, and we want to help make right the damage that Trump has done with the stroke of a pen. Please contact us at [online@aft.org](mailto:online@aft.org). If you are not sure whether these orders directly affect you or what action to take as a result,

the most complete resource for determining this comes from our partners at the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, who have published this [toolkit about the executive orders](#).

### What to do as an AFT affiliate leader and ally

Whether or not you are among those directly affected, we encourage you to embrace the important ally role you have in distributing credible information and providing assistance in your communities. While we cannot provide case-by-case legal assistance, we will provide resources about the entry ban, who it affects, what those affected should expect, how to connect to legal assistance in your area and how to organize to fight against these bigoted actions. We urge you to distribute this information to your employers and the people you serve via your local listservs and social media channels. We also encourage you to consult the websites of AFT-partner organizations on immigration and refugee issues:

American Civil Liberties Union: [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org),  
Council on American-Islamic Relations: [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com),

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National Immigration Law Center: [www.nilc.org](http://www.nilc.org),  
United We Dream: [www.unitedwedream.org](http://www.unitedwedream.org).

### How this situation could change

LEGISLATIVELY: Congress has the power to override executive orders via a two-thirds majority vote in both the House and the Senate. As the extraordinary circumstances surrounding Trump's election and his behavior in office continue to unfold, with members of Congress on both sides of the aisle expressing concerns, we urge you to contact your U.S. senators and representatives to express your views about these executive orders and the direction they are taking our country.

LEGALLY: There is at least one judicial stay of one part of the Muslim ban in place, issued by a federal judge in Brooklyn on Saturday night. That stay affects only people who were present on U.S. soil at the time it was issued—helping an estimated 100-200 people affected by the president's order. While it prohibits their deportation from the airports where they were detained, it does not authorize their entry to the United States, and we have received reports that Customs and Border Protection agents in some airports are refusing

to abide by the stay. Litigation about these orders and their implementation is likely to be protracted. We will look for ways for the AFT to join as an amicus on behalf of those affected.

### VIA GRASS-ROOTS

ACTION: Visible, public support of immigrants and refugees is needed, now more than ever. Encourage elected leaders of your states, localities, institutions and other organizations to take strong positions against these executive orders and their impact on us, our students, our patients, our neighbors and our communities. Now more than ever, we need to reaffirm that our schools, campuses, hospitals and public spaces remain safe zones and sanctuary spaces, free from racism, hate and the threat of deportation. Sample resolutions and related resources are available on [AFT All In](#).

As you may know, there are protests of these executive orders occurring in many U.S. cities. Saturday night, elected officials joined with protesters to successfully secure the release of some who had been detained at airports in several cities. We support these efforts, have [participated in them personally](#), and call on you to make the support of your local, your state

federation and the AFT known where you live by joining in peaceful efforts to oppose the entry ban.

### The executive orders and the duty to represent

Finally, we want to alert you to a lesser-reported feature of the executive order regarding sanctuary cities that Trump signed on Wednesday. Like the anti-immigrant law passed in Arizona in 2010, the order contains language threatening those who "facilitate the presence" of undocumented immigrants with fines and penalties. Some of you have asked whether to interpret language of this kind to proscribe you from assisting DACAmented or undocumented union members—or, by extension, students, patients, families and members of the community. While we do not yet fully know how this feature will be interpreted or enforced, we know that we cannot cooperate with injustice. We call upon our affiliate leaders to continue to embrace the high standards you have always observed as unionists—and, beyond this, to respond to the calls your conscience or religious beliefs may make upon you to oppose these orders and protect those they target. You have the full support of the AFT in principled opposition

to these orders. If you have questions or concerns about your rights and responsibilities in specific circumstances, please contact the AFT legal department via our central phone line at 202-879-4400.

In unity,  
Randi Weingarten,  
AFT President

Lorretta Johnson,  
AFT Secretary-Treasurer

Mary Cathryn Ricker,  
AFT Executive Vice  
President