

# Position Statement on the Executive Order Regarding Immigration from Select Countries, January 27, 2017

## Issued by:

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)  
The College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA)  
The International Assembly (IA),  
The National Social Studies Supervisors Association (NSSSA),  
The Social Science Educational Consortium (SSEC)  
*approved February 8, 2017*

On January 27, 2017, an Executive Order placed a limit on immigration from seven, primarily Muslim countries, suspending active visas and forcing the detainment of individuals seeking entry into the United States. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) and its affiliated groups, the **College and University Faculty Assembly**, the **International Assembly**, the **National Social Studies Supervisors Association**, and the **Social Science Education Consortium**, issue the following joint statement to reaffirm our commitment to an open and inclusive democracy.

*The National Council for the Social Studies concludes that this Executive Order, restricting immigration from seven mostly Muslim countries, contradicts our core values and beliefs as social studies educators.* NCSS promotes social studies as an “integrated study of the social sciences and humanities” with a purpose to “promote civic competence” and help individuals make informed “decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society” (NCSS, 2010). We find fault with this Executive Order based on these compelling reasons.

First, the executive order contradicts

our belief in **religious freedom and tolerance**. NCSS holds that “knowledge about religions is not only a characteristic of an educated person but is necessary for effective and engaged citizenship in a diverse nation and world” (NCSS 2014, Statement on the Study About Religions). Religious literacy facilitates cross-cultural understanding and encourages respect for the ideals of religious freedom. This Executive Order targets immigrants from specific nations and ethnic groups associated with the religion of Islam. Restricting a group based on nation of origin and religion runs counter to our national ideals, as our history was settled, in part, by immigrants escaping religious or ideological persecution.

Second, the executive order challenges our commitment to **human rights education and humanitarian efforts**. We believe in the “democratic ideals of freedom, equality, non-discrimination and respect for the rights of all. In an increasingly globalized world and within the United States itself, this growth and development must emphasize not only the rights and obligations arising from American citizenship but also the rights and responsibilities that arise domes-

tically and globally from our common humanity” (NCSS 2014, Statement on Human Rights Education). Many of the individuals affected by this recent Executive Order are refugees fleeing countries where their basic human rights are in jeopardy; for others, their life depends upon the ability to seek asylum in another country. Refugees, by definition, cannot return to any homeland. They remain one of the world’s most vulnerable populations. Because our organization has established a commitment to teaching about and affirming human rights for all individuals, we must work to protect refugees, as well as any additional groups that become vulnerable through current or future travel restrictions.

Third, the executive order is an affront to our support of **global and international education**. We believe “that the human experience is an increasingly globalized phenomenon in which people are constantly being influenced by transnational, cross-cultural, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic interactions” (NCSS 2016, Statement on Global and International Education). According to the Institute of International Education, this Executive Order impacts about 17,000 international students from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen who study in the United States. These students offer multiple perspectives and a global voice to our schools and universities. Social studies educators must expand efforts to globalize the curriculum and the classroom, as well as to aid

U.S. students in addressing global issues with an approach that promotes intellectual honesty and action (NCSS 2016, Statement on Global and International Education).

In social studies classrooms, students learn that there are complex issues which cross local, national, and international lines. These issues require solutions that are interdisciplinary and draw on the knowledge and perspectives of diverse populations. When those ideas and interactions are restricted, the possible ranges of solutions offered by an educated populace are limited. As educators, it is our professional responsibility to teach and support all students in our institutions regardless of race, gender, language, religion, nation of origin, sexual preference, and ability. We acknowledge that many of our students, families, and communities are directly impacted by this executive order. This executive order contradicts our core beliefs about the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy and compromises the social studies profession, our students, families and communities. Furthermore, it counters a core tenet of global and international education—to use knowledge of world cultures to act on behalf of international understanding, tolerance and empathy.

We, the National Council for the Social Studies and its affiliated groups listed above, issue this statement against the Executive Order dated on January 27, 2017 that restricts travel and imposes a limit on immigration.

### Related Position Statements

- Position Statement on Global and International Education in Social Studies (2016), The National Council for the Social Studies: [www.socialstudies.org/positions/global\\_and\\_international\\_education](http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/global_and_international_education)
- Position Statement on Social Studies and the Aftermath of the 2016 Election, The Executive Board of the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies: [cufa.socialstudies.org/cufa/resourcesmain/2016electionstatement](http://cufa.socialstudies.org/cufa/resourcesmain/2016electionstatement)

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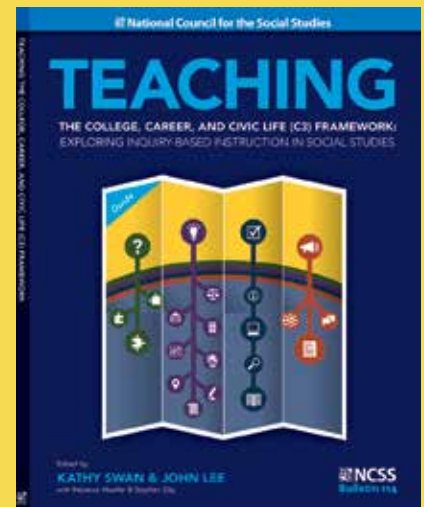
- Position Statement on Human Rights Education (2014), The National Council for the Social Studies: A Necessity for Effective Social and Civic Learning: [www.socialstudies.org/positions/human\\_rights\\_education\\_2014](http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/human_rights_education_2014)
- Position Statement on the Study about Religions in the Social Studies Curriculum (2014), The National Council for the Social Studies: [www.socialstudies.org/positions/study\\_about\\_religions](http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/study_about_religions)

### Social Studies Standards

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (2010, p. 3), The National Council for the Social Studies: [www.socialstudies.org/standards/execsummary](http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/execsummary)

### About NCSS

*Founded in 1921, National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has grown to be the largest association in the country devoted solely to social studies education. NCSS engages and supports educators in strengthening and advocating social studies. With members in all the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 69 foreign countries, NCSS serves as an umbrella organization for elementary, secondary, and college teachers of history, civics, geography, economics, political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and law-related education. Organized into a network of more than 110 affiliated state, local, and regional councils and associated groups, the NCSS membership represents K-12 classroom teachers, college and university faculty members, curriculum designers and specialists, social studies supervisors, and leaders in the various disciplines that constitute the social studies.* ●



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