



Advancing Peace and the Iranian-American Community

Support the Equal Protection in Travel Act (S. 2449 / H.R. 4380)

In the aftermath of terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, Congress aimed to close loopholes in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) so that people who had recently traveled to areas where ISIS operates could not travel to the U.S. without a visa. But behind closed doors, Congressional negotiators added Iran to the list and restricted anyone who is a dual national of Iran, Iraq, Sudan or Syria from participating in the VWP. The legislation was included in a must-pass spending bill and now restricts visa-free travel to the U.S. for Europeans of Iranian descent.

These restrictions discriminate on the basis of family heritage

Because Iran, Iraq and Sudan pass citizenship automatically through the father, individuals can be restricted from the VWP based on their family heritage and not on any decision they have made.

The discriminatory restrictions do not make America safer

The dual-nationals restrictions automatically punish individuals who have never even set foot in Syria, Iraq, or other territories where ISIS operates.

These restrictions would not have applied to the San Bernardino attackers - an American and a Pakistani who studied in Saudi Arabia; nor to the 9/11 hijackers - fifteen Saudi nationals, two UAE nationals, and one Egyptian national.

Americans could be targeted based on their heritage

The VWP is reciprocal, meaning Congress is inviting similar restrictions to be imposed on American citizens. Iranian Americans could be barred from traveling visa-free to the EU, Japan, Australia or any number of VWP countries simply because of their heritage.

Who supports repealing the provisions?

Iranian-American, Arab-American and civil liberties organizations including the ACLU have sought the repeal of the restrictions.

35 CEOs and tech leaders sent a letter urging Congress to repeal the restrictions, including Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban and Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey.

The Equal Protection in Travel Act of 2016 is a bipartisan solution

The Equal Protection of Travel Act narrowly repeals the restrictions against dual nationals.

- *House sponsors: Reps. Amash (R-MI), Massie (R-KY), Conyers (D-MI) and Dingell (D-MI).*
- *Senate sponsors: Sens. Flake (R-AZ), Durbin (D-IL) and Booker (D-NJ).*