



Statement Regarding Executive Orders and Assault on Immigrants



Boston, January 25, 2017 – This is a difficult day for PAIR and for the immigrant community. The President, by Executive Order, has committed his administration to erecting barriers on the U.S. border, uses derogatory words to describe noncitizens, and plans to punish cities that protect the rights and dignity of immigrants. His promises to suspend refugee processing and to ban refugees from certain countries from entering the U.S. is creating much fear and panic in our already vulnerable immigrant communities. The U.S. is a great nation that values freedom, safety, diversity and acceptance. PAIR is

committed to these values for all and will continue to protect immigrant rights.

Founded in 1989, PAIR is the leading provider of pro bono immigration services to asylum-seekers and immigrants unjustly detained by immigration authorities in Massachusetts. PAIR serves over 1,000 clients a year and has a successful outcome in 95% of its asylum cases. Susan Cohen, President of PAIR's Board of Directors, makes clear that, “Now, more than ever, we must stand up for the bedrock American value of welcoming, not demonizing, immigrants and refugees who seek safe haven in the United States. When we protect and defend the rights of immigrants, we underscore the importance of the rule of law in a civil society, and everyone benefits.”

PAIR will fulfill its mission to serve asylum-seekers and immigrants unjustly detained by immigration. We will continue to provide legal orientation presentations in and out of detention; will serve as many asylum-seekers as possible; will conduct asylum intake for those who fear returning to their home country; and will gear up to recruit, train, and mentor as many volunteers as our organization can handle.

We will protect clients like "**Zaroon**," an internet activist who fled Syria after being targeted by secret police for his postings on Facebook protesting the Syrian government and their treatment of

civilians caught in the civil war. With the help of PAIR and his volunteer team from Ropes & Gray LLP, he won asylum in the U.S. and continues to advocate for democracy and freedom.

PAIR is committed to providing legal resources to clients like "**Irtaza**," a young Iranian man who was targeted by the government because of his religious conversion. In his home country, he could not even openly pray without the fear of death. Thanks to PAIR and his volunteer team at Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, PC, was granted asylum and now enjoys the freedom to practice the faith of his choosing here in the United States.

PAIR will stand by clients like "**Zara**," a young woman who fled Ecuador after being repeatedly harassed, beaten, and raped due to her sexual orientation. Though she tried to build a life in her home country, she and her partner continued to face severe discrimination and violence. With the help of PAIR, she won asylum in the U.S. and continues to advocate for LGBTQ rights.

"It is a time of great uncertainty, but PAIR will do the important work that is needed to achieve justice, transparency and fairness in the immigration laws for our clients and immigrants in the greater community," said Anita P. Sharma, PAIR's Executive Director.

PAIR has been holding legal orientation, or "Know Your Rights" sessions for immigration detainees and the general community. If you are interested in a legal orientation session or concerned about your immigration status, call and speak with a staff member at PAIR. If you would like to collaborate or support our work, please feel free to contact us or to [donate](#) to PAIR. We are grateful to have allies like you on our side.

In solidarity,
Amanda, Amy, Anita, Elena, Jennifer, and Seth