

California Department of Education
News Release

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson Responds to President Trump's Immigration Order

SACRAMENTO—State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson today urged all California public schools to continue “Safe Haven” efforts for students and their families, particularly Muslims and refugees targeted by recent federal actions.

“As a teacher, coach, father, citizen, and leader of California’s public school system, I strongly disagree with President Trump’s recent immigration order and want to make sure that our students and families who are refugees and Muslims feel safe and protected in our schools,” said Torlakson. “California public schools welcome all students regardless of their heritage, religion, ethnicity, background, disability, or sexual orientation.

“Diversity is California’s strength. We do not just welcome diversity. We celebrate it. An ill-conceived presidential executive order is not going to change that.”

President Trump signed an executive order on Friday that barred refugees from any nation from entering the United States for 120 days, indefinitely barred refugees from Syria, and also blocked citizens from seven Muslim majority nations from entering the U.S. in the next 90 days. Those nations are Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

Torlakson urged school districts to continue to make sure students and their families feel safe at school and reminded educators and the public that existing laws protect students’ records from questions about immigration status.

Torlakson in December wrote a letter to all 1,025 California school districts and urged them to adopt “Safe Haven” resolutions which many districts have or will soon do so. “Engaged parents play a key role in helping students succeed on their way to 21st century careers and college,” Torlakson said.

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