

Issue: Immigration/Refugee

Legislator: Governor Tom Wolf

Date: January 29, 2017

Content: Governor Wolf on Travel Ban Executive Order: “This Is Not Who We Are”

Philadelphia, PA – Today, Governor Wolf met with the Assalis, whose family members are legal immigrants from Syria who were traveling to their new home in Allentown yesterday, but were detained and sent back to the Middle East following President Trump’s executive order.

Following this meeting, Governor Wolf made the below remarks.

This is Dr. and Mrs. Assali. They are Pennsylvanians. They have been living in Allentown for decades. One of Mrs. Assali’s brothers is 25 year veteran of the United State Army. He fought in Desert Storm. Dr. Assali’s brother and sister-in-law had been working for an immigration visa for the last 13 years, since 2003. Yesterday, they were denied permission to enter the United States in the airport in Philadelphia.

I think others can speak to the legal issues far better than I, but as a Pennsylvanian and an American, this is not who we are. Pennsylvania is a place of welcome. The United States is set up to be a place where people can escape oppression. This is not a place people come to experience oppression and that’s what the Assali’s family members experienced. I for one, as an American and as a Pennsylvania, am outraged.

The Attorney General of Pennsylvania Josh Shapiro, along with 16 other attorneys general from around the country have questioned the constitutionality of what the president did. I don’t think the president thought this through. I applaud Attorney General Shaprio and his fellow attorneys general.

I am speaking as a Pennsylvanian, as an American – this family has done great things in Allentown for Pennsylvania and I think it’s a dark day for all of us that the Assali’s family was treated this way.

I will do everything I can to help bring their loved ones to Pennsylvania.

These remarks have been edited for clarity.

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