



For Immediate Release

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**PRESS RELEASE: The Borderland Immigration Council Denounces Abusive Practices at El Paso
Ports of Entry**

When: Tuesday, January 31, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

Where: Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, 1500 E. Yandell Drive

Who: Members of the Borderland Immigration Council, including:

Linda Rivas, Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center
Carlos Spector, Mexicanos en Exilio
Fernando Garcia, Border Network for Human Rights
Brian Jacobi, Texas Civil Rights Project
Eddie Becket, Esq.
Melissa Lopez, Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services

The Borderland Immigration Council (“BIC) denounces newly reported abuses by federal officials at El Paso ports of entry. On January 29, 2017, President Trump signed an executive order effectively banning immigrant and non-immigrant entries, for at least 90 days, for nationals of Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The order further suspends the U.S. refugee admission of Muslims from those same countries. Nonetheless, despite the order’s focus on Muslim immigrants from seven specific countries, Mexican and Latin American legal permanent residents (“LPRs”) have begun to report abusive immigration tactics by federal officials in El Paso.

Since the signing of the January 29, 2017, executive order, BIC has received reports from distraught LPRs who claim that they were detained and removed from the U.S. while attempting to lawfully enter through El Paso ports of entry. Most alarmingly, many have reported that United States federal officials are attempting to force LPRs to sign Form I-407s, which is statement of intent to abandon one’s residency status in the United States.

To combat these deceptive and abusive practices, BIC issues an alert to our LPR neighbors, friends, and family that they should not, and are not required to, to sign any Form I-407 without the presence of an attorney to advise them. Form I-407 is abandonment of residence status and must be signed voluntarily. There are no negative ramifications for refusing to sign. There are only dire immigration consequences if an LPR does sign a Form I-407. Neither failure to sign nor abandonment of one's residency are grounds for detention. Rather, an LPR who refuses to sign a Form I-407 must be taken before an immigration judge to determine whether they have lost their LPR status. It is the government's burden at such a hearing to prove that the LPR abandoned their residency voluntarily.

In light of the above abuses, BIC expresses its opposition to the letter and spirit of the above-referenced Executive Order, denounces the discriminatory persecution of Muslim refugees entering the United States after an intense vetting process, and simultaneously denounces the ongoing abuses of LPRS along the U.S.-Mexico border.

If any member of our community has been a victim of these practices, or knows any individual who has faced such abusive tactics at a port of entry, BIC asks that they report the abuse by calling 915-532-3799 ext. 141. Assistance is available in Spanish.

For more information, please visit:
<https://www.borderlandimmigrationcouncil.org/>