



The Iranian-American Bar Association

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Statement Concerning Recent Detention of Iranian Nationals by the Immigration and Naturalization Service

The Iranian-American Bar Association (the "IABA") has come to learn, through media reports and various communications that have been forwarded to it, of the recent detention of substantial numbers of Iranian nationals, among others, who had reported to various Immigration and Naturalization Services offices to register under the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System. Many of these reports include allegations of serious misconduct by immigration officials in certain centers. Like the rest of the Iranian-American community, the IABA is deeply concerned about these reports and condemns any instances of misconduct and any violations of civil liberties in the strongest terms. In addition, the IABA applauds and fully supports the commendable efforts of attorneys and others across the country, including a number of IABA members, in connection with the legal representation of individuals who have been detained.

In accordance with its mission, the IABA remains committed to protecting and advancing the legal interests of the Iranian-American community. To this end, the IABA has taken important steps toward educating the public as well as our elected representatives and other officials in both the legislative and executive branches about legal issues affecting Americans of Iranian descent and their kin, including immigration matters. In this regard, the IABA has in the past six months communicated the legitimate concerns of the Iranian-American community relating to recent developments in the immigration laws concerning visa issuance to, and registration of, Iranian nationals with certain members of Congress and with agencies in the executive branch, including the Departments of State and Justice. More specifically, in November the IABA presented a position paper concerning such recent developments in which, among other things, the IABA has encouraged the Government to move away from using nationality as a criterion for requiring special registration. In response to our position paper and the efforts of other Iranian-American individuals, officials at the Justice and State Departments as well as other agencies have expressed a willingness to have a continuing dialogue with the IABA and other Iranian-Americans on these subjects. The IABA has welcomed the invitation and intends to engage in a constructive dialogue with appropriate officials in order to more effectively voice the legitimate concerns of the Iranian-American community at the highest levels of government and in the hope of ensuring that future policy decisions affecting our community will adequately reflect the interests of Iranian-Americans.

As a continuation of our efforts to date on behalf of the Iranian-American community concerning special registration requirements and as a first step in our response to the recent detention of Iranian nationals and the allegations of misconduct, the IABA currently is gathering and reviewing information concerning recent events and intends to investigate allegations of

misconduct. The purpose of our investigation will be to establish whether there have been any violations of law and to determine the most appropriate and effective course of action by the IABA and/or others in the Iranian-American community to ensure that any legitimate grievances will be adequately redressed and that any instances of misconduct will not be repeated in the future. To enable the IABA to conduct its investigation in a credible and thorough manner, we kindly request that all persons with factual knowledge regarding detentions and alleged misconduct in connection with the recent implementation of the special registration process communicate their detailed account to the IABA. The IABA thanks you in advance for your cooperation in connection with this very important matter.

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