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Resolution passed by the Senate 2/7/2017

Resolution to Rescind President Trump's Executive Order on Immigration

Submitted by: Marc Cyr/Ed Mondor

1/30/2017

Motion:

The Faculty Senate of Georgia Southern University condemns President Trump's executive order banning travel by people, including students and scholars, even those with current legal visas, from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen as detrimental to the principles and functioning of higher education in the United States, and specifically in Georgia. We call upon *the University System of Georgia to urge Georgia's state and federal legislators* to work toward getting President Trump to rescind this ill-conceived and ill-implemented order.

Rationales:

Georgia Southern has at least 4 faculty members, including a Dean, who originally hail from the banned countries. (We say "at least" because the list of international faculty is not complete.) We also have about 400 non-US citizens with various kinds of visas enrolled as students. At the University of Georgia about 75 students and scholars come from one of the proscribed countries (*CHE* online 1-30). According to the *AJC*, "A day after it was released, Trump's executive order was already impacting Georgia students. A third-year doctoral student at Clark Atlanta University traveling back from Saudi Arabia with her sister was detained at an airport in that country. Airport officials told Reham Noaman, 31, and her sister, a sophomore at Georgia State University, they couldn't issue them boarding passes for their direct flight to Atlanta. The sisters, who hold F1 student visas, were told by airport officials the

denial was due to the president's order. The executive order suspends all refugees from entering the U.S. for 120 days, and bars those from war-torn Syria indefinitely. It also blocks entry to citizens from seven Muslim nations, including Noaman's home country of Yemen, for 90 days."

Numerous other institutions of higher education are expressing their concern about or outright condemning President Trump's order. Duke issued this statement: "Duke University is committed to, and is greatly enriched by, the open exchange of students, scholars and ideas from all over the globe. We are deeply concerned about the well-being of students, faculty and staff who may be impacted by the policies that have now been put in place, and will join with the rest of higher education to bring these concerns to the attention of policymakers and the public" (Fox News online 1-29). Notre Dame's President, Father John I. Jenkins, has called the order "sweeping, indiscriminate and abrupt," and said, "If it stands, it will over time diminish the scope and strength of the educational and research efforts of American universities, which have been the source not only of intellectual discovery but of economic innovation for the United States and international understanding for our world; and, above all, it will demean our nation" (CBS News online 1-29).

Even the Koch brothers' network, Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce, has condemned this order, saying, "The travel ban is the wrong approach and will likely be counter-productive. . . . Our country has benefited tremendously from a history of welcoming people from all cultures and backgrounds. This is a hallmark of free and open societies" (*Fortune* 1-29).

Response:

Minutes, 2-7-2017

Ed Mondor (COSM) noted that President Hebert had spoken earlier about having a human perspective on elements of consolidation, and the impact on people underlies this motion. This was not coming from any political perspective at all, whether Republican, Democrat, or Independent. He had started sending out emails to people "and the only one crazy enough to reply was Marc Cyr." The whole point was that this policy directly affected people at Georgia Southern. He then read the motion: "The Faculty Senate of Georgia Southern University condemns President Trump's executive order banning travel by people, including students and scholars, even those with current legal visas, from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen as detrimental to

the principles and functioning of higher education in the United States, and specifically in Georgia. We call upon the University System of Georgia to urge Georgia's state and federal legislators to work toward getting President Trump to rescind this ill-conceived and ill-implemented order." Part of his impetus was that he had seen statements from other universities around the US, but hadn't heard anything from ours or the University of Georgia. He wanted to start a conversation about how that order directly impacts our Eagles right here at Georgia Southern.

Marc Cyr (CLASS) said he thought there had been a statement by the President of Georgia State, but he could be wrong about that. However, besides other reports, he noted a report on this in the Chronicle of Higher Education from the day before stating that the judge's order stopping the ban temporarily was supported by statements from the University of Washington and Washington State University, and by a number of high-tech companies, all of whom wrote about the economic damage to the United States and the damage to the functioning of higher of education, the interchange of ideas, of scholars and students from here going there, from there coming here, and the Page 16 human cost to the families of people like that. It seemed to him that the order was ill-conceived and even more badly implemented and that we ought to make a statement about it because it impacts people that we know, it impacts our students, it impacts all the principles of our profession and what we do.

Ming Fang He (COE) said she belongs to the American Educational Research Association, and that large organization sent out a position statement asking President Trump to rethink this executive order. She wanted GSU to be in solidarity with all the other institutions against this order that she saw as almost violating our Constitution. She noted many scholars worldwide had signed a petition to protest the order by not attending conferences in the US.

Marc Cyr (CLASS) raised a point of order, noting the motion had not been seconded.

Mark Welford (COSM) seconded the motion.

(Secretary's Note: Inaudible name) (Public Health) wanted to tone the language down, wondering if instead of condemn, it could be "we have concerns" or something similar. Cyr said that the first word he used was "damn," and thought that anything less than "condemn" was at best mealy-mouthed and cringing.

Mondor (COSM) said he completely agreed with the wording, and noted the resolution did not condemn any political party but only this specific act. Jake Simons (COBA)

shared the concern for potential impact on people at Georgia Southern, but also had concerns about the proposal: First, given that the faculty senate has no direct control of this issue, he thought it was arguably outside the scope of this body. Second, he said “the proposal is likely to be perceived as presumptuous and could be detrimental to our credibility as a group.” Third, he thought the policy’s impact on faculty and others was “sufficiently apparent to the President and the Board of Regents that the proposal is probably not necessary or helpful to their desire or ability to advocate a desirable resolution.”

President Hebert did not want to get in the middle of the discussion, but noted that USG was in the process of preparing a statement; he did not know when it would be released. Also, the system presidents received written notification requesting that they not make public statements regarding this until after USG issues their statement. He added that he did not disagree with the discussion he was hearing because he had looked into this, and we have four students who could potentially be affected by this. They are currently in the US, but they can’t travel home and risk not being able to have their visas renewed to come back in.

Cyr said that this was not a “public statement” in terms of alerting the media, but a statement to be forwarded to the USG, going up through the system, and focused on the educational elements involved with that order.

President Hebert said that even if the motion did not pass, he thought the rationale was great and he would bring it to the System as they prepare their statement. If that statement did not align with the current motion, it could be pursued then if it had not already been passed. He was meeting the Chancellor the following Monday and was hesitant to bring the motion itself forward because “the language would be inflammatory in that audience,” but thought the rationale would be beneficial.

(Secretary’s Note: Someone from CLASS spoke, but is only audible in fragments. It seems both she and a graduate student in her department were personally affected by the order, and both were anxious because they were unsure of the status of their visas.)

Lowell Mooney (COBA) reminded everyone that the ban was only temporary; if it were a permanent ban, he would favor the motion. “In respect to all of the Americans whose lives have been inconvenienced forever . . . waiting two or three months for them to get the system revamped is [not] too much to ask or expect.” He thought we should wait and see how the order and the stay on the order turn out.

Ming Fang He (COE) said that even though it is temporary, faculty and students with a green card or a visa will be tracked every time they cross the border. She called the order “a direct threat to anybody who comes from other countries.”

Mark Edwards (COSM) wondered if the authors of the motion would be open to tabling it for a month given that the ban may be struck down, when they might be in a better position if the Board of Regents does craft a statement that they could get behind, at which time they could modify the motion to specify what they did or did not support in the System’s statement. He thought also this would put Dr. Hebert in a stronger position.

[Secretary’s Note: The recording of the following statement is fragmentary.]

Janice Steirn (CLASS) said she’d be comfortable with that if we knew when the USG statement would come out. Since that could be a long time or never, she wanted the senate to voice disagreement with the order now.

[Secretary’s Note: The speaker’s name is inaudible, but may be Jake Simons (COBA).]

It was proposed that when the vote came, it be by show of hands.

Moderator Flynn agreed. James Stephens (Public Health) said “if we speak as one voice we have a more powerful voice and a louder voice.” He preferred to wait for the System statement so we would speak as one. He thought waiting for up to a month was a short time. Hans Schanz (COSM) said he understood this to be a letter to the USG, not a public letter or public statement. We would be expressing our sentiment to the USG, not “going rogue here.”

Marc Cyr (CLASS) agreed, and said the motion might act to bolster or direct the System’s statement.

Jake Simons (COBA) asked if he was correct that the motion would be a recommendation to the President, who would ultimately decide whether or not to send the resolution to the USG.

[Secretary’s Note: The following remarks are audible only in fragments.]

Moderator Flynn said that was generally the case, but he would have to find out if that process applied to such a resolution. He called for a show of hands vote, and the motion was Approved 29-8.

Someone asked for abstentions to be counted, but Flynn noted that “abstentions are not votes” and therefore are not counted.