



SABA North America's Statement on Executive Orders

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

During his first week in office, President Trump issued dozens of executive orders, including several that impact the South Asian community. Over the last week, we have been researching the orders to understand their scope and impact, listening closely to the concerns of our members and the broader South Asian community, and identifying tools and resources to amplify our voice and address questions.

SABA North America is particularly focused on any changes that affect our core advocacy issues: immigration, reproductive justice, and voting rights. And, as an affinity bar organization, we are closely following changes to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Each of these issues are central to our communities' values, safety, and integration into American society.

Below, is a summary of the Executive Orders to date, and their impact:

Immigration Executive Orders

The Day 1 Immigration Executive Orders seek to drastically reshape the U.S. immigration system through stricter enforcement, reduced legal immigration pathways, limitations on humanitarian protections, and heightened scrutiny of non-citizens. Below is a breakdown of the administration's overarching immigration goals and strategies:

Rescinding Previous Policies: The new administration rescinded several Biden-era executive orders related to immigration enforcement, legal immigration, family reunification, refugee resettlement, and cooperation with other countries on migration. This includes ending programs such as the CBP One App and the humanitarian parole programs for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV).

Restricting Citizenship: The Birthright Citizenship executive order seeks to limit birthright citizenship, stating that only children born in the U.S. to a lawful permanent resident or U.S. citizen will be granted citizenship. This would exclude children of undocumented parents, as well as those born to parents with nonimmigrant status (e.g., H-1B, L-1, TN, etc.), potentially affecting the ability of U.S. companies to recruit international talent. For example, if a spouse came over on an H-1B visa, and the second spouse had H-4 status, and they had a child, that child would no longer have automatic U.S. Citizenship, and it is unclear what citizenship that child would receive at the time of birth. This uncertainty could lead to young families and international talent no longer wishing to come to the U.S. The provision would apply to births beginning February 20, 2025 (i.e., 30 days following the EO). To date, multiple lawsuits have been filed around the country challenging this executive order, and as of the posting of this statement, Judge Coughenour in the



U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, halted the implementation of the Executive Order temporarily while additional briefs are being filed related to the same.

Maximal Enforcement of Immigration Law: The executive orders prioritize the maximal enforcement of immigration laws, expanding expedited removal, increasing detention capacity, and creating federal Homeland Security Task Forces in each state. There is also a push to register undocumented aliens and impose fines on those who do not comply. Additionally, the orders seek to penalize countries that do not accept the return of their nationals. In 2022, the Pew Research Center, published a study that found that there were more than 700,000 undocumented Indians living in the United States, making them the third largest group in the United States. Currently, India has identified 18,000 Indian citizens that it will take back. We know that many in our community are fearful of what is to come, and the uncertainty of raids being carried out in schools, places of worship, and other locations throughout the country. If you have questions relating to what your rights are, we urge you to speak with an immigration attorney as soon as possible.

Border Security: The executive orders aim to achieve complete operational control of the border by restarting the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), ending "catch-and-release," and increasing border barriers. President Trump also a declared national emergency at the southern border to facilitate the use of military personnel and resources for immigration enforcement. By instituting a national emergency at the southern border, that means that asylum cases are no longer being processed at the southern border. The administration also seeks to block border entries, including for asylum seekers.

Increased Scrutiny and Vetting: The administration seeks to impose travel bans on nations with deficient vetting procedures. There will also be enhanced vetting of visa applicants and those already in the U.S., including a review of all visa programs. Refugee programs have been suspended, with the possibility of a future resumption under a case-by-case basis. This includes the pause on the refugee program relating to Afghan nationals who helped the U.S. during the war. SABA North America previously lobbied for the passage of the Afghan Adjustment Act.

Limiting Access to Humanitarian Programs and Benefits: The executive orders seek to limit grants of humanitarian parole, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), work permits, and public benefits, suggesting a stricter interpretation of existing statutes. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may designate citizens of a foreign country for TPS because of conditions that prevent these individuals from returning home from the United States safely, such as when a country is facing ongoing armed conflict, an environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary circumstances. Beneficiaries of TPS are authorized to live and work in the United States for the duration of the TPS designation. Currently, countries designated for TPS include Afghanistan, Burma (Myanmar), Cameroon, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Lebanon, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen. Additionally, employees who may be able to renew their work authorization previously may no longer be able to if they fall in this status. We expect that work authorization applications for individuals in these statuses may be significantly delayed.



Redefining Gender: The executive orders redefine gender within the federal government to recognize only two sexes, male and female. This change will impact immigration procedures, particularly for transgender and nonbinary individuals, and will affect identity documents, asylum applications, and detention center policies.

“America First” Trade Policy: The order directs that U.S. trade policies promote "investment and productivity, enhances our Nation’s industrial and technological advantages, defends our economic and national security, and — above all — benefits American workers, manufacturers, farmers, ranchers, entrepreneurs, and businesses”. This may lead to a review of trade agreements like the USMCA, potentially affecting visa eligibility for Canadians and Mexicans. The directive may also result in increased scrutiny of employment-based visas.

DEI Executive Orders

President Trump issued several executive orders that impact DEI initiatives, including orders to eliminate federal DEI efforts and to pause any loans, grants, or financial assistance towards DEI initiatives. Significantly, one of the executive orders requires all federal agencies to identify nine (9) entities for investigation, including publicly traded corporations, large non-profits, bar and medical associations, etc. While these orders claim to promote equity, there is significant concern that it will hinder and hurt several communities and industries. SABA North America believes that well placed diversity, equity and inclusion efforts have shown to reduce longstanding bias and barriers, while promoting national unity, security and economic interests.

Reproductive Health

In addition to the slew of executive orders that were released last week, the White House also removed critical information pertaining to reproductive health. Specifically, in 2022, the White House launched [reproductiverights.gov](https://www.reproductiverights.gov) to help people understand their rights around emergency care, birth control coverage, and much more. The webpage was disabled on January 20, 2025.

SABA North America’s Current Efforts:

We understand that our community has many questions as we navigate the new orders. It is critically important that we come together as a community and engage with our elected representatives. SABA North America is currently working on a few initiatives:

1. **Congressional Outreach:** We are proactively contacting Congressional offices to ensure they fully understand the potential impact these changes could have on diverse and vulnerable communities.
2. **Advocacy Toolkit:** We are creating a toolkit to empower SABA members and the broader South Asian community to connect with their elected officials and share their views



on how the executive orders impact them personally. We have heard time and time again from Congressional leaders that the most important way to have an impact is to let your elected leaders know what is important to you, including through personal statements and stories. Our toolkit will provide detailed instructions on contacting elected leaders and template letters that can be used for outreach. We hope to have this toolkit available in the next few weeks for our members and chapters to use.

3. **Chapter-led Initiatives:** Our local chapters are at the forefront, leading efforts to engage with their communities and connect with local Congressional representatives. We will continue to collaborate with Chapters on our advocacy efforts at a local level.

4. **Lobby Week:** We are organizing a dedicated lobby week in Washington D.C. to advocate directly for our community's interests and ensure our voices are heard by key decision-makers. This year our Lobby Week will be May 12 – 14, 2025 in D.C. If you are interested in joining or learning more, please contact our VP Advocacy at advocacy@sabanorthamerica.com

Regardless of political affiliations, our members share a common goal: to strengthen our communities. We remain committed to working together and with the current Administration to protect families, expand economic opportunities, and celebrate the diversity that strengthens our nation.

We are here to support you and will continue to provide updates as they become available.