For Immediate Release
Friday, January 27, 2017

Statement from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund on President Trump’s Discriminatory Executive Order on Immigration and Refugees

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Inc. (LDF) stands firm in our belief that any policy that discriminates on the basis of race, national origin, or religious belief is an affront to our Constitution and who we are as a nation. Today’s executive order targeting Syrians and other Muslims harkens back to some of the most shameful moments in our history which resulted in the deaths of countless men, women, and children fleeing war and persecution. As LDF Founder Thurgood Marshall so aptly observed regarding the exclusion of American citizens of Japanese origin during World War II: “Yet we unquestionably invite disaster if there are times when it is considered permissible to ignore or thrust aside constitutional guarantees and prohibitions.”

Today’s action will have a profound effect on Black communities. The Pew Research Center estimates that there were 3.3 million Muslims of all ages (including children under 18) living in the United States in 2015. According to their 2014 religious landscape study, 28 percent of American Muslims report their race as Black and 64 percent of Muslims in the United States were foreign born. This latest executive order targets people from Somalia and Sudan; in 2016, Somali refugees were the second-largest group of Muslim refugees. This will traumatize, terrorize, and potentially separate many American families. From its founding, LDF’s mission has been rooted in anti-discrimination and freedom of religion principles. We stand ready to partner with and support our allies in pushing back against policies which have been born directly out of hateful and divisive rhetoric and Islamophobia.

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*Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.*