

Summary of Federal Watchlist & Border Crossing Issues

Many innocent American travelers who pose no security risk are victims of unfair or incorrect placement on the no-fly list or other federal watchlists and face religious discrimination while attempting to cross the U.S. – Canada Border.

Extra-Judicial Exile of American Citizens: CAIR has recently dealt with a number of high profile cases concerning the extra-judicial exile of American citizens traveling abroad. When attempting to return home, these U.S. citizens find themselves placed on the no-fly list, presumably by the FBI, and are often coerced into speaking with foreign law enforcement and FBI agents while deprived of legal counsel. At times these citizens are asked to spy on their religious communities.

Congressional Solution: Support a request letter to the Justice Department’s Office of the Inspector General to investigate the FBI’s practice of placing American citizens on the no-fly list while they are traveling abroad.

DHS TRIP Inadequacies: While the DHS has established the DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (TRIP) to redress improper placement on these federal watchlists, the system does not provide Americans citizens with any real opportunities or mechanisms to redress their improper designation.

Congressional Solution: Support a strong letter of inquiry to DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano that seeks clarification of the DHS TRIP program’s ability to ensure travelers who are unfairly or incorrectly placed on federal watchlists are able to effectively challenge their designation.

Religious Profiling & Questioning at the U.S.-Canada Border: Moreover, CAIR continues to receive numerous complaints by American citizens about Customs and Border Protection agents repeatedly harassing them at the U.S.-Canada border. These complaints include being unnecessarily handcuffed, brandishing of weapons, enduring prolonged periods of detention, invasive and humiliating body searches, and inappropriate questions about religion.

Congressional Solution: Support a strong letter of inquiry to CBP Deputy Commissioner that seeks clarification of CBP’s policies and practices in dealing with religious questioning, profiling, and harassment at the U.S. Border.