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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

February 8, 2018

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

It is with great concern that I write you today about the drastic and imminent effects of the deportation of Mr. Syed Ahmed Jamal, which will - similar to so many other families across the nation - ripple outwards to affect his family and community and potentially leave three United States Citizens parentless. After reviewing Mr. Jamal's case, it is my understanding that there are compelling humanitarian reasons for this difficult legal matter to be fully vetted in front of an immigration judge. As both a U.S. Representative and a Methodist minister, I believe that it is my moral and ethical responsibility to strongly advocate for a favorable exercise of discretion for Mr. Jamal, and to ensure that immigrant families caught in similar circumstances are discussed as congress works on comprehensive immigration reform legislation, which I think we can all agree is immediately needed.

As you have advocated, we must show restraint for immigrant families who are playing an important and contributing role in our communities and help such families navigate the challenging and overloaded, legal immigration system. By prioritizing only violent criminal immigration cases, we can continue to embrace our country's legacy of immigrant foundations and keep families together and contributing to our communities. Keeping a loving and nurturing family together is not just a good thing, it is the whole thing. It is a moral imperative that we immediately halt Immigration and Customs Enforcement's focus on families and refocus their limited resources on the persecution of violent, criminal offenders within our communities.

To reiterate that Mr. Jamal, like so many other immigrants across our nation, is the father of three United States citizens, ages 12, 14, and 17, and an integral part of his family. Lamentably, his wife has a medical condition which limits her mobility making him the sole provider. Prior to his arrest, Mr. Jamal was working as a chemistry professor at Park University and is well respected within his community as a constant volunteer with his local school district, having even run to serve on their board of education. Mr. Jamal had been trying to comply with all federal immigration laws and tried to seek help throughout his 30 years within the United States. Additionally, Mr. Jamal is a highly educated man with degrees in molecular biosciences and pharmaceutical engineering and was working on a terminal degree in his field of study. If Mr. Jamal is deported, he will not only leave behind his U.S. based family, but because his faith and beliefs, he could face persecution or death at the hands of extremists in his home country.

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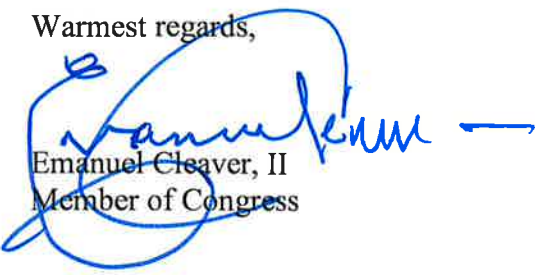
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Sadly, there are hundreds of thousands of cases like these, where hard working immigrants are awaiting an uncertain fate at the hands of ICE offices across our nation. Let us use this case as a sobering reminder of the many people who face the fear of being in Mr. Jamal's shoes. Unfortunately for Mr. Jamal, it is still unclear as to where ICE has taken him since the stay was granted; meaning his wife and three teenage children must continue to have sleepless nights without the knowledge of where their father is or the ability to visit him for what may be his final days in the country. I am requesting that you acknowledge the stay and release him from ICE detention to allow Mr. Jamal to see his family and prepare for his day before the judge. I vow to focus my efforts on bipartisan, family-first, comprehensive immigration reform efforts to ensure that immigration priorities and limited resources maintain focus on violent, criminal cases. As for me, I never want to hear the words which, in my religious tradition fell from the lips of the central figure of my faith, "I was a stranger and you received me not."

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or Manny Abarca, from my staff, at 816-842-4545.

Warmest regards,



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress