

ASBMB STATEMENT FOLLOWING PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S SUSPENSION OF IMMIGRATION

The following is a statement from Benjamin Corb, public affairs director for the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology:

“American science is international.

American science is at its best when scientists in America collaborate with experts from other countries — and when the world’s most promising student–researchers come to America for their education and training.

The work being done in American laboratories — at small startups and big corporations, at government agencies and research centers, and at colleges and universities — depends on the importation of talented and skilled students and workers.

It is on that basis that we denounce President Donald Trump’s executive order, issued Wednesday, suspending immigration, with few exemptions, for the next 60 days and potentially beyond.

All Americans benefit from advances in technology and medicine, and the greatest advances that we enjoy are fueled by the deep knowledge and hard work of scientists from around the world who conduct their research in the United States.

According to the National Science Foundation, more than half of postdoctoral researchers in the life sciences are temporary, visa-holding noncitizens.

At a time when biomedical researchers are playing a critical role in the national response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, any policy that would limit the ability for researchers to staff their labs is a grave mistake that could damage the American scientific enterprise in ways we cannot measure.

Furthermore, language in the executive order that leaves open the possibility for this immigration suspension to be extended, which is likely to discourage the next generation of scientists who might have been eager to travel to America for training and collaborative scientific endeavors.

The ASBMB is an international organization. Many of its members who study or conduct research in the U.S. hail from other nations. Some run dual labs in the U.S. and overseas. About 20 percent of its members live and work abroad. Closing the borders to scientists is wrong-minded — especially during an emergency that requires the very best minds that the world has to offer.”