



**Boston Chinatown  
Neighborhood Center**  
波士頓華埠社區中心

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MEDIA CONTACT:  
Carmen Chan, BCNC  
617-603-2538, carmen.chan@bcnc.net

### **Press Release**

#### **A Statement from Giles Li, Executive Director of Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center**

Last week, President Trump signed executive orders that call for the severe restriction of support and opportunities for immigrants. As a Family Centered organization, BCNC strongly believes that when immigrants and their families are able to participate fully in our society, then all people benefit. This country has a long history of offering opportunities to disadvantaged immigrants and refugees from across the globe; this is what makes us American.

The plan to strip federal funding from so-called “sanctuary cities” – in which local police do not participate or assist in the federal detention or deportation process of undocumented immigrants – is shortsighted and misguided. We in the BCNC community know that having a strong relationship with local law enforcement is vital for having a strong community. High quality community policing requires trusting relationships between law enforcement and community members; BCNC believes that asking police to serve as immigration authorities would undermine that trust.

Many consider Boston to be a sanctuary city, and Mayor Walsh and the City Council have reaffirmed their commitment to being a place that accepts and welcomes all people, regardless of immigration status. I serve on the Advisory Board for the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Advancement, and I proudly and steadfastly stand with City leadership on this issue.

In addition, President Trump has called for construction to begin on a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border to keep people from crossing into this country without documentation. This expensive project is largely symbolic, as about half of undocumented immigrants in this country initially entered legally, and many do not come through the southern border at all. This project will have limited impact on reducing unauthorized immigration, but will significantly undermine the immigrant community and the public conversation about immigration in this country.

This policy has the unintended consequence of casting Mexican immigrants – and by extension all Latinos in this country – as criminals. BCNC believes this unnecessarily endangers the safety of Latinos across the country, regardless of status, as well as other immigrant populations. The President’s and Congress’ time and energy would be much better served discussing meaningful reforms to immigration policies that do not automatically cast immigrants who come through the southern border as criminals, regardless of the specific circumstances from which they come.

Lastly, just this past Friday, the President signed another executive order that will temporarily close the program that resettles refugees from certain Muslim majority countries, including Syria. This is an unethical, immoral, and ultimately un-American policy that would recklessly and unnecessarily further endanger thousands of innocent refugee families internationally, as well as contribute to an environment in this country that devalues and jeopardizes the safety of Muslim people and families.



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Our community has a deep connection with the history of exclusion. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred the entry of Chinese immigrants into this country – the first and still only immigration restriction based on race. In 1903, federal immigration authorities conducted an unprecedented raid on Boston’s Chinatown to detain and deport undocumented Chinese men. This was done in response to one crime, but had the effect of painting the entire community as criminal.

Initially, the Chinese Exclusion Act was a ten-year ban, but ended up being in effect until 1943, and not fully dismantled until 1965. The U.S. Senate and House both formally apologized to the Chinese American community by 2012, acknowledging that it is a mistake to restrict immigration based on something as immutable as race. Our country should not repeat this mistake.

As a family-centered organization, we will continue to support our constituents who feel excluded by today’s political and social environment. As a community-based service organization, we will continue to provide a space where immigrants of all backgrounds are welcomed and made to feel they belong. BCNC will continue to uphold these ideals regardless of whatever challenges or threats we face in the future.

#### **About Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center**

Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) is the largest nonprofit social service provider dedicated to Asian families in the Greater Boston area, supporting over 2,000 children, youth, and adults each year at three locations in Boston and Quincy.

The mission of BCNC is to ensure that the children, youth, and families we serve have the resources and supports they need to achieve greater economic success and social well-being. BCNC helps families access the resources and services available to them, provide opportunities for them to learn and acquire skills, and create a community of mutual support and encouragement. For more information, go to [www.bcnc.net](http://www.bcnc.net).

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