

Immigrants Detained at Philadelphia Airport To Be Released Sunday

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Attorneys for several people detained Saturday at Philadelphia International Airport pursuant to the Muslim Ban/“extreme vetting” executive order issued by President Trump on Friday stated that they have received assurance from the U.S. Attorney’s office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania that everyone detained at the Philadelphia airport under that order on Saturday will be admitted to the United States and released from custody on Sunday. The executive order sparked the filing of a lawsuit in the early morning hours on Saturday by the ACLU and others in Brooklyn. After a hearing on Saturday evening, U.S. District Court Judge Ann Donnelly of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York issued an injunction forbidding the federal government from deporting anyone from the United States as directed by the President’s order.

The New York court’s order did not address what would happen to others who had been refused entry and detained throughout the day in different locations. Philadelphia civil rights attorneys mobilized to bring legal action to free those detained – who were not even allowed to contact family or speak with attorneys. Meanwhile, hundreds of people – including city, state and federal elected officials – rushed to the airport. Chanting “Philadelphia is for all, no ban, no wall,” these peaceful demonstrators demanded the release of the people who had been detained. Shortly after midnight, government lawyers confirmed to the civil rights attorneys and U.S. District Court Judge C. Darnell Jones that the detainees would be admitted to the United States and released on Sunday morning.

The attorneys involved in these efforts include Mary Catherine Roper and Molly Tack-Hooper of the ACLU of Pennsylvania; John Grogan and Irv Ackelsberg of the Philadelphia law firm, Langer, Grogan & Diver LLP; Jonathan Feinberg of the Philadelphia law firm, Kairys, Rudovsky, Messing & Feinberg LLP; Caitlin Barry, a law professor at Villanova University Law School, and Ayodele Gansallo, of HIAS-PA.