



## IMMIGRATION LITIGATION DEPARTMENT

### WHO WE ARE/WHAT WE DO:

MLFA's Immigration Litigation Department fights for the rights of Muslims in the United States facing discrimination by U.S. immigration agencies based on their race, religion, or country of origin. MLFA's immigration cases often involve complex factual and legal questions that intersect with national security. We select cases that have the potential for a broader impact on the Muslim community at large.

MLFA's immigration attorneys vigorously represent Muslims in the U.S. who are seeking immigration benefits and experiencing excessive delays, pretextual denials of applications by immigration agencies (USCIS and DOS), or removal proceedings (EOIR). We seek administrative remedies and strategically use federal court litigation when we believe that our clients are being treated unfairly in violation of the U.S. Constitution.

Our attorneys know immigration policy, and we hold the government to its policies. We point out to government agencies when they fail to follow their policies or attempt to interpret law too broadly. We have assisted our clients in obtaining lawful permanent residence (i.e., "green card") and U.S. citizenship by proving the government's false claims of fraud, material misrepresentation, or support of terrorism were motivated by systematic bias against Muslim immigrants. Our clients are from many countries throughout the world – especially Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

### WHAT WE NEED TO MOVE FORWARD:

Our pro bono legal services are in increasingly high demand, and we expect the next administration's policies will create a surge in requests for our services. Our department must continue this critical work and increase our reach within the community. Hiring additional attorneys and support staff will improve our ability to represent our clients. Without a doubt, we must expand our community outreach through educational and training opportunities in our fight for justice. We are committed to collaborating and partnering with other organizations that also serve vulnerable Muslim immigrants. Through active community engagement and collaboration, we can do more and be better positioned to serve.

### WHY WE EXIST/WHY WE MATTER:

For over 150 years, the U.S. government has targeted various immigrant populations deemed economic, political, or security threats to the United States. The events of September 11, 2001, essentially led the United States government to view all Muslims immigrants as potential foreign terrorists. In response, Congress enacted multiple laws aimed at preventing the next attack on U.S. soil. However, the end result for Muslim immigrants is a pattern of discrimination that leaves applications for U.S. immigration benefits languishing for years or even decades.

U.S. government agencies repeatedly employ culturally insensitive tactics which ignore language barriers, cultural differences, and religious practices, to challenge an applicant's eligibility for immigration benefits. For example, USCIS will often misconstrue truthful answers as a misrepresentation, discounting the fact that the conversation is filled with legal jargon and often in a non-native language. We frequently see agencies interpreting answers from the perspective of a U.S.-born Christian, which ignores the variety of individual experiences across the globe.

Additionally, we have identified methods to challenge this practice and obtain immigration benefits for our clients. For the past 20+ years, governmental agencies have recycled the same schemes repeatedly across the U.S. to deny Muslims immigration benefits. The U.S. government wants Americans to believe that it is merely protecting us against foreign threats to our security. However, MLFA cuts through the pretextual biased conclusions and addresses the government's xenophobic agenda applied to Muslim immigrants. ***The key to MLFA's Immigration Litigation Department's success is that we have spotted the government's pattern of lies, pretext, and bias.***

