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Statement of Assumption College President Francesco C. Cesareo, Ph.D. on President Trump's Divisive Executive Order

On Friday, the President of the United States signed an executive order concerning U.S. immigration policy and the refugee admissions program to the United States. As a Catholic institution of higher learning founded on the principle that all men and women are created in the image and likeness of God, this executive order is contrary to the fundamental beliefs and values of our community. This morning in Washington, D.C. I joined with a number of Catholic college and university presidents in signing a statement opposing this executive order. It read, in part, "we reaffirm the commitment of our institutions to creating inclusive, welcoming campus environments that embrace people of all faiths and cultures. Catholic higher education was founded precisely to serve the children of Catholic immigrants who in their own time were excluded from higher education. This is a legacy that we proudly pledge to continue."

Assumption College was founded to educate and serve families of French Canadian immigrants who settled in New England. Since 1904, the College has welcomed, and continues to welcome, the children of immigrants, as well as students from a number of different countries and faiths, who have enriched our community by their presence and contributions. As stated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops yesterday, "We believe that now more than ever, welcoming newcomers and refugees is an act of love and hope."

As a Catholic College with a mission rooted in thoughtful citizenship and compassionate service, we hope, pray, that the president will recognize the great human indignity of this action and rescind the executive order.

Both my wife and I are children of immigrants. Like so many of their generation, my parents, having lived through the destruction of World War II in Italy, aspired to sail across the Atlantic Ocean and establish a better life for their future family in the United States. In the 1950s those aspirations became a reality when they left their homeland and settled in the United States. Today, refugees are fleeing their war-torn or oppressive homelands for the same reason: to seek a better life.

As a College community, let us recommit ourselves to welcoming and supporting our current and future generations of immigrants and their children as brothers and sisters. Let us hold in our prayers those unfairly and unjustly impacted by this executive order.

