

SEA Executive Committee Statement on International Travel and Immigration

The Society of Early Americanists is dedicated to furthering the exchange of ideas and information among scholars of various disciplines who study the literature and culture of America to approximately 1800. Several recent governmental actions and declarations on immigration, travel, refugees, and global relationships hinder our mission and violate our core values of international cooperation and sound humanistic inquiry. We observe with great concern a growing anti-immigrant and isolationist rhetoric that incites unwarranted public hostility toward the free and open exchange of people, ideas, knowledge, research, study, and teaching across borders. We thus call for a bipartisan immigration and refugee policy—informed by sound evidence, reasoned discourse, and universal human rights.

Our Society counts among its members many international and immigrant scholars who contribute greatly to the understanding of the diverse cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, and linguistic forces that shaped the Americas from pre-Columbian times through the founding of the U.S. and other nation states in the hemisphere. Jointly, we understand the United States in particular as a country forged by the movement, displacement, and contact of its indigenous and immigrant peoples. We thus oppose policies and public rhetoric restricting international travel, limiting intellectual exchange, cutting humanitarian assistance, and endangering the lives and safety of immigrant populations.

We dedicate the work of our Society to a balanced public discourse based on informed study of the historical forces, individual voices, and manifold peoples that have formed the United States and its global relationships. We commit our biannual conference as well as our on-going communications to the inclusion of scholars and students world-wide. For members or conference participants intimidated or barred from attending our meeting, we will provide alternative methods to allow them to present their work, receive work presented, and interact with members of our Society.

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