

**A Community Demonstration "In Love and Resistance"
Against President Trump's Order Limiting Immigration
Federal Courthouse, Springfield MA,
Friday, February 3, 2017**

Immigration. Immigrants.

God Bless America.

If it weren't for green cards and the regulations of the INS and US government, I wouldn't be here this afternoon.

You see, I was born in Montreal and grew up in Toronto.

And, when the time came for me to seek a rabbinic position outside the smaller Jewish community of Canada, the United States became my destination.

I was "vetted." I was fingerprinted. I was interviewed. And, after many months, I received my green card.

Five years later, I happily and proudly became a citizen of the United States.

Though I hadn't thought about it in quite this way before President Trump's executive order limiting immigration so unfairly and arbitrarily, **I am an immigrant.**

But I'm not the only one.

If it weren't for an open door welcome to immigrants, there are many other Americans who would not have been able to make their grand contributions to this country.

The grandparents and sometimes grandparents of the following Americans **were all immigrants.**

They were Jews fleeing persecution who came to this country.

Their descendants are essentially immigrants too.

Immigrants - Americans - such as:

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Justice Louis Brandeis

And...Philip Roth

David Axelrod

Alan Dershowitz

Mark Zuckerberg

Stephen Spielberg

Tom Friedman

Bob Dylan

Leonard Cohen

Albert Einstein

Betty Friedan

Gloria Steinem

Jerry Seinfeld

Natalie Portman

Lisa Kudrow

Julia Louis-Dreyfus

Sandy Koufax

Kevin Youklis

Barbra Streisand

Leonard Bernstein

John Stewart

Immigrants.

Without America, none of these Americans would have become familiar names to us.

Immigrants.

Without America, I wouldn't be here.

Immigrants.

Without open doors, even Donald Trump's family wouldn't have managed the journey to freedom.

God bless America...

It's a beautiful phrase AND it's even the title of a famous song...written by...Irving Berlin...

A famous American songwriter...Yes...?

But not so fast...

Berlin was born as Israel Isadore Baline in 1881 in Russia.

At the age of five, little Israel's family sought safety in America.

Several years later - having immigrated here - he wrote our theme song...

He - THE IMMIGRANT - wrote the song because he believed in his new homeland.

An open, tolerant, welcoming, inclusive homeland.

A place where immigrants have to be welcomed.

It was true back then when he wrote the song in 1918.

It's true today in 2017.

God bless America!