



# ENQUIRY

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## Kim Strassel's Talk: A Step Toward Intellectual Diversity at Hamilton

By ELIZABETH BARRY  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Leading up to Kim Strassel's January 25 lecture, rumors of a protest against the event circulated around campus.

Many students that I spoke with, especially those on the political left, assumed Ms. Strassel's talk would be offensive -- a direct attack on all liberals. After all, they argued, the title of her speech (also the title of her most recent, critically acclaimed book) was *The Intimidation Game: How the Left Is Silencing Free Speech*. As one student wrote in the *Spectator*, she attended the lecture with "a general idea of how this was going to go just from the title alone."

To borrow a popular proverb, many of these students were judging Strassel's book by its cover. As one of *Enquiry's* associate editors has noted, there was a definite "disparity between the title and the content of her work. The title might appear to identify the book (and lecture) as right-wing anti-liberal propaganda ... [but] Strassel's talk could not have been further from this." Instead of blindly attacking the entire political left, Strassel focused the content of her talk on specific efforts made by leftists to silence free speech. She noted that her original intent in writing the book was not to crucify the left, but rather to identify tactics that politicians and governmental organizations on both sides of the aisle use to silence free speech. It was only after conducting thorough research -- and realizing that she had found far fewer examples of the right stifling free speech -- that she decided to focus on the left.

Strassel began her talk by warning of a "you can say anything you want as long as I agree with it" attitude among those who seek to limit free speech. She argued that the left more frequently resorted to this kind of tactic in 2010,

after the U.S. Supreme Court decided the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* case in favor of removing federal restrictions on political expenditures by certain corporate entities. This part of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law had restricted corporations from contributing to issue ads and other campaign activities.

Strassel explained that excessive federal restrictions on campaign contributions infringed upon the First Amendment by

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eliminating avenues through which people and organizations could get out messages. In doing so, she called money a proxy for, an equivalent of, free speech. Though Strassel is correct in her assessment that some campaign finance laws have functioned, in part, as

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## Trump's Muslim Ban

By FRED POLLEVICK  
STAFF WRITER

January 30<sup>th</sup> would have been Fred Korematsu's 98th birthday. Korematsu, a Japanese American, was famous for challenging Japanese internment camps during World War II before the Supreme Court (*Korematsu v. United States*). Though he was an American citizen by birth, he was forced by law to pack up his belongings and register at an internment camp -- a requirement he believed was unconstitutional.

In 2004, one year before his death, Korematsu wrote in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that "no one should ever be locked away simply because they share the same race, ethnicity, or religion as a spy or terrorist. If that principle was

## This Week's News in 140 Characters

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TRUMP'S MUSLIM BAN cont.

not learned from the internment of Japanese Americans, then these are very dangerous times for our democracy." His words serve as an eerie prediction regarding President Trump's recent immigration ban. Trump's ban -- before it was blocked by a federal judge's ruling -- was set to last for 90 days. It aimed to stop people from seven countries compromised by ISIS -- Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen -- from entering the United States. Additionally, Trump's administration stated

*"His words serve as an eerie prediction regarding President Trump's recent immigration ban."*

that green card holders and special immigrants could expect a "swift entry," but that they would also be checked. The ban did not apply to dual nationals and diplomats. It is also important to note that the ban would not have directly affected U.S. citizens. Though both Trump and his

supporters are quick to say that President Obama did a "similar thing" in 2011, Obama never issued an outright ban on all people from predominantly Muslim countries trying to enter the United States. Instead, he slowed down the refugee admittance process and required re-examination of Iraqi refugees already in the United States in response to threats issued by two Iraqi refugees in Kentucky. According to the State Department's Refugee Processing Center, 6,339 Iraqi refugees still entered the U.S. in 2011.

How can President Trump's isolationist attitude possibly benefit Americans? Our college's namesake, who was perhaps the most influential founding father, was an immigrant. I am an immigrant. The people I email, message, and speak with on a regular basis are immigrants or descendants of immigrants. In fact, other than the two or three Native Americans I've met (excluding those who make the "I'm 1/200th Cherokee" argument), I have spent my entire life surrounded by descendants of immigrants. The United States of America is a nation of, for, and by immigrants. As the inscription

“speech laws” that encroached upon corporate entities’ First Amendment rights, she should have de-emphasized the importance of money in campaigns (money isn’t the issue here, free speech is) and included a few additional words on the right of corporations to defend their interests.

As Strassel correctly said, when the Supreme Court decision was handed down in 2010, the left “freaked out” and increasingly resorted to a strategy of intimidation and harassment. For example, some Senate Democrats demanded that the IRS target certain groups – or, as President Obama called them, “shadowy organizations” and “outside influences” – that were opposed to Obama’s policies. As a result, the IRS put nearly 400 applications by political groups for non-profit status “on ice.” Strassel argued that this was part of a deliberate strategy intended to stifle the political speech of conservative groups leading up to the 2010 midterm election and 2012 presidential election. “The IRS knew what it was doing and knew it was wrong,” she said, pointing to a damning paper trail that indicates this.

The “John Doe” case in Wisconsin, Strassel maintained, was another effort by the left to silence free speech. In response to Governor Scott Walker’s 2011 union reform legislation, Democratic prosecutors conducted a series of secret investigations into supporting groups, which resulted in pre-dawn raids. In one of the targeted homes, a teenage son was threatened by police officers to keep his mouth shut about what happened. The Wisconsin Supreme Court eventually ruled that the prosecutors involved had

*“In one of the targeted homes, a teenage son was threatened by police officers to keep his mouth shut about what happened.”*

attempted to intimidate certain organizations into not giving further donations to Republicans.

Similarly, members of the political left used intimidation – in this case disclosure laws – to target right-of-center citizens in California. Strassel explained that during the debate over Proposition 8 (a ballot measure to prohibit same-sex marriage) disclosure laws – which were originally intended to keep track of the activities of politicians – were used to identify supporters of the proposition. Supporters were not only identified but also targeted: opponents of Prop. 8 created a searchable map

of their homes and addresses. Many found themselves subject to flash-mob protesters and had their property damaged. The CEO of Mozilla, who privately supported Prop. 8, even lost his job.

Strassel argued that this intimidation tactic was also used against the American Legislative

*“Many found themselves subject to flash-mob protesters and had their property damaged. The CEO of Mozilla, who privately supported Prop. 8, even lost his job.”*

Exchange Council (ALEC), a nonprofit group that writes model free-market legislation for consideration at the state level. After the Trayvon Martin shooting in 2012, activist groups began accusing the group of being “racist” for its previous help in drafting “stand your ground” laws. The activist groups found out who gave money to ALEC – which resulted in the attempted blackmail of board members of major companies – and the group lost half of its donors within two months.

Finally, Strassel pointed to efforts by left-leaning people on college campuses to stifle free speech. She mentioned the increasing presence at colleges and universities of a well-funded organization called “UnKoch My Campus,” which aims to shut down one form of intellectual diversity – efforts and proposals receiving funding from the libertarian Koch Foundation. I do wish, especially given the nature of her audience, that Strassel had further explored the issue of free speech on college campuses.

Overall, however, her talk was brilliant. She drove home a number of salient points and handled difficult questions from the audience with grace. It was also refreshing to hear someone who is right-of-center speak at Hamilton. I can only hope that – at least in the name of intellectual diversity – we can bring more conservative speakers to campus.

TRUMP’S MUSLIM BAN cont.

on the Statue of Liberty says: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!” If that does not speak volumes about the importance of immigration to the United States, I am not sure what does.

I came to this country shortly after a day that will live in infamy, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. I was three

years old and the only words I knew in English were “hello,” “yes,” and “thank you.” But as soon as I arrived I fell in love with what I am now proud to call my country. I found friends, people who were eager to learn about me and help me acculturate to this new life. They invited me, with smiles and open hearts, to try new things, like St. Louis baby back ribs (which quickly became my favorite food as a child). I loved, and still love, the United States. If I could do it all over again, I would pick this nation over all others in a heartbeat.

While I understand that President Trump is trying to ensure the safety of the American people, his immigration ban upsets me. Even if it were lifted after those 90 days, children emigrating from these seven countries would not have the same positive experience that I did coming here. There would be a bias against them from the outset. They would look like the people Trump aimed to target with his ban, and therefore like enemies of the United States. They might not

*“The United States of America is a nation of, for, and by immigrants.”*

be welcomed into homes, sports teams, and schools like I was. They might be rejected as people simply because they cannot choose their birthplace and ethnicity.

Let’s learn from Korematsu, from the Statue of Liberty, from others like Alexander Hamilton, Albert Einstein, and Andrew Carnegie about how great immigration can be. As elementary school children across the nation learn to sing: “This land is your land, this land is my land...” Let’s keep it that way.

# CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

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