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To Whom It May Concern:

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I write to add my voice to the many who request that the United States stay any and all removal proceedings against Muhammed Zahid Chaudhry and grant his petition for citizenship at the earliest possible opportunity.

In my professional life, I serve by appointment of the Washington State Supreme Court as the Director of the Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid, a judicial branch agency that works to ensure justice and access to justice for people living in poverty. I have worked for justice in multiple public and private capacities over the course my 37 year career as an attorney. But I do not write today as an attorney nor will I speak to the specifics of the legal proceeding involving Zahid Chaudhry. Today I write as a friend and supporter to ask that any and all equitable considerations be weighed in his favor, that all removal proceedings against this remarkable and patriotic man be terminated, and that his petition for citizenship be granted.

I have known Zahid Chaudhry and his wife Ann for seven or eight years. We are social friends and have worked on a number of common endeavors. We first came to know one another through a Jewish Muslim listening group here in Olympia, Washington. At the time, I had volunteered to do service work on the Chaudhry's home which was requiring a number of repairs. Over the years since, Zahid, Ann and our many common friends have shared meals, attended family and extended family events, and worked on common civic projects. I know Zahid Chaudhry to be a humble man who is committed to his wife, his family, his faith community and, most importantly here, his adopted country.

Zahid Chaudhry is a decorated disabled U.S. Army veteran who served in the United States Army with distinction and was honorably discharged. He sustained service-related injuries in the military that have left him wheelchair-bound. He has been married to his wife Ann Chaudhry, a US citizen, for over 16 years. He has given of his time and talents to so many in our community. He has volunteered with a wide range of social, charitable, civic and faith based organizations. He is a model citizen, mentor, teacher and a dear friend to all who meet and spend time with him. Despite his legal and physical challenges, he is an upbeat, positive person - always ready with a smile and a hug.

The effort to remove Zahid Chaudhry from this country is troubling. I leave argument of the specifics to his attorney. But let me say this - in a nation that remains dedicated to principles of justice, fairness and due process, this case stands as an outlier. By any measure, Zahid has earned the right and privilege to remain in the United States and to become of citizen of our nation. His removal would be a great stain on the fabric of our justice system. His removal would harm his family, his friends and the larger community that has come to know and rely on him for so many things. For these reasons, I respectfully urge all leniency, the recognition of all equities and the termination of all removal proceedings against Mr. Chaudhry. I look forward to the day when I can bear witness to his taking the oath of citizenship and allegiance to the United States of America.

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May justice prevail.

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