



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS S. CHIN
ATTORNEY GENERAL

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**HAWAII TRAVEL BAN LAWSUIT ADDS
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CLAIM**

HONOLULU – Attorney General Doug Chin announced today that Hawaii federal judge Derrick K. Watson has partially lifted the stay he placed last week on Hawaii’s travel ban lawsuit. This action by Judge Watson allows Dr. Ismail Elshikh, a U.S. citizen and Hawaii resident, to join Hawaii’s case against the President’s Executive Order banning travel from seven Muslim-majority nations and suspending the nation’s refugee program.

Judge Watson also allowed Hawaii to add a new count, alleging violations of the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The Act prohibits the federal government from substantially burdening the exercise of religion, even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability.

The stay Judge Watson issued last week remains in place for all other purposes, so long as the nationwide injunction against implementation of the President’s Executive Order, signed on January 27, 2017, remains in place. On Friday, February 10th, a 3-0 decision from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals allowed the nationwide injunction to remain in place.

Attorney General Chin added, “President Trump’s executive order imposes a substantial burden on the exercise of religion. Freedom of religion is one of the most important rights and values for citizens in this country, no matter what religion that is. The additional claim in our complaint protects that right.”

A copy of the first amended complaint in *Hawaii v. Trump* is attached.

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For more information, contact:

Joshua A. Wisch
Special Assistant to the Attorney General
Phone: (808) 586-1284
Email: joshua.A.Wisch@hawaii.gov
Web: <http://ag.hawaii.gov>
Twitter: @ATGHlGov