

English Lawmakers Debating Banning Donald Trump

British lawmakers are to hold a debate on a petition signed by more than a half-million people calling for U.S. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump to be barred from Britain after his proposal to stop Muslims entering the United States.

The debate, called by the Petitions Committee of the lower house of parliament, will be held on Jan. 18 but will not be followed by a vote.

The British government responds to all petitions that gain more than 10,000 signatures and topics are considered for parliamentary debate if they reach 100,000.

"By scheduling a debate ... the Committee is not expressing a view on whether or not the government should exclude Donald Trump from the UK," said committee chairwoman Helen Jones.

"As with any decision to schedule a petition for debate, it simply means that the committee has decided that the subject should be debated," she said in a statement. "A debate will allow a range of views to be expressed."

Last month Trump, a billionaire developer and frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination, prompted international outrage with his call for a ban on all Muslims entering the United States. His comments followed a shooting spree by two Muslims who the FBI said had been radicalised.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said the comments were "divisive, unhelpful and quite simply wrong". His finance minister George Osborne said Trump's comments flew in the face of the founding principles of the United States but that banning him from Britain was not the best way to respond.

Britain is a close ally of the United States, including in the Western military campaign targeting Islamist militants in Iraq and Syria.

Trump owns two golf courses in Scotland which he visited in 2015.

In the past, people have been banned from entering Britain for fostering hatred that might provoke inter-community violence.

The petition said: "If the United Kingdom is to continue applying the 'unacceptable behavior' criteria to those who wish to enter its borders, it must be fairly applied to the rich as well as poor, and the weak as well as the powerful."

It was launched by Suzanne Kelly, a Scottish-based campaigner and longtime critic of Trump's latest golf course in Aberdeenshire. {eo}

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