

North Carolina Law Life

President Obama Lifts the Travel Ban for Those Infected with HIV

By: Oliver Branch. *This was posted Wednesday, November 4th, 2009*

After a twenty-two year long ban, President Obama has lifted the ban that kept those who have HIV from traveling and immigrating to the United States. The [final rule](#), published November 2, 2009 will become effective January 1, 2010.

A ban on travel and immigration to the U.S. by individuals with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, was first established by the Reagan-era U.S. Public Health Service and then given further support when Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) added HIV to the travel-exclusion list in a move that was ultimately passed unanimously by the Senate in 1987.

At an October 30, 2009 press conference, [President Obama had the following to say about lifting the ban:](#)

“A couple of years ago Michelle and I were in Africa and we tried to combat the stigma when we were in Kenya by taking a public HIV/AIDS test. And I’m proud to announce today we’re about to take another step towards ending that stigma.

Twenty-two years ago, in a decision rooted in fear rather than fact, the United States instituted a travel ban on entry into the country for people living with HIV/AIDS. Now, we talk about reducing the stigma of this disease — yet we’ve treated a visitor living with it as a threat. We lead the world when it comes to helping stem the AIDS pandemic — yet we are one of only a dozen countries that still bar people from HIV from entering our own country. If we want to be the global leader in combating HIV/AIDS, we need to act like it. “

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