

June 20, 2012

The Honorable Peter T. King  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H2-176 Ford House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman King,

The undersigned Muslim, Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian organizations strongly object to the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, hearing entitled, “The American Muslim Response to Hearings on Radicalization within their Community.”

Congress has a solemn responsibility to examine threats to our national security. Any such inquiry, however, must be undertaken with great care to ensure that no ethnic, racial or religious group is singled out for scrutiny based on the actions of individuals within that community. In reaction to earlier hearings held by the Committee, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder stated last year that “[m]y focus is on individuals as opposed to communities and I think that is what we need to be focused on . . . We don’t want to stigmatize, we don’t want to alienate entire communities . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Today, American Muslims reflect every race and ethnicity that comprise our nation’s rich heritage. In fact, Muslims have been an integral part of America since its founding when the first slave ships arrived on its shores. Muslims serve our nation as teachers, business owners, factory workers, cab drivers, doctors, lawyers, law enforcement, firefighters, members of Congress, and members of the armed forces. Their research and innovation adds to the progress of our nation in science, business, medicine, and technology. They contribute to every aspect of our nation’s economy and society. The essence of our country is *e pluribus unum*: out of many, practicing their faith freely and contributing each in their own way, comes a strong, unified one.

Despite the multitude and range of pressing national security issues facing our country, the Committee continues to expend valuable time and resources by holding hearings that single out and target one faith community, American Muslims. When this series of hearings began in early 2011, American Muslims came together to urge Congress to address all forms of violence motivated by extremist beliefs and to do so in a full, fair, and objective way. Joining the community at that time, and continuing their support today, are allies in the civil rights, faith-based, national security, Arab, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Sikh communities.

As with this Committee’s prior hearings on the “radicalization” of American Muslims, this hearing does not feature witnesses whose views are representative of the vast majority of millions of American Muslims. Rather, the witnesses scheduled to testify—Zuhdi Jasser, Asra Nomani, and Qanta Ahmed—have an alarmingly long and extensive record of public statements

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<sup>1</sup> See Jason Ryan, *Holder Criticizes Tone and Focus of Rep. King Hearings on Muslim Radicalization*, ABC News The Note Blog, Mar. 9, 2011, <http://blogs.abcnews.com/thenote/2011/03/holder-criticizes-tone-and-focus-of-rep-king-hearings-on-muslim-radicalization.html>.

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that promote the offensive, woefully misguided notion that Americans who are Muslim are not deserving of the same constitutional rights and protections as their fellow Americans. In addition, Jasser and Ahmed have ties to well-funded organizations intent on demonizing Islam and marginalizing American Muslims.

This hearing is inconsistent with American ideals of fairness and justice and is an embarrassment to the U.S. House of Representatives and American democracy. Targeting a group of Americans for government scrutiny based on their faith is divisive and wrong. As we learned from the McCarthy era, Congress has a solemn duty to wield its investigatory power responsibly. This hearing is an irresponsible attack on American Muslims and deserves to be judged harshly.

Signed,

ACCESS

American Coalition for Good Government (ACGG)

American Muslim Voice

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

Arab American Association of New York

Arab American Institute

Arab Muslim American Federation

Association of Muslim American Lawyers (AMAL)

Council of Islamic Organization of Michigan (CIOM)

Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC)

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving

EMERGE-USA

Florida Islamic Association (Sunrise, FL)

Florida Muslim Bar Association (FMBA)

Georgia Association of Muslim Lawyers (GAML)

Imam Husain Islamic Center (Minnesota)

Imamia Medics International (IMI)

IMAN

Independent Viewpoints

Islamic Ahlul Bayt Association (IABA)

Islamic Center of Bay Shore

Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati

Islamic Center of Long Island

Islamic Center of Zahra-SA

Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)

Islamic Information Center (IIC)

Islamic Shura Council of Southern California

Islamic Society of Greater Houston (ISGH)

Long Island Neighbors for American Values

Muslim Advocates

Muslim Alliance in North America (MANA)

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Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition (MACLC)  
Muslim Bar Association of Chicago  
Muslim Bar Association of New York  
Muslim Civil Liberties Union (MCLU)  
Muslim Consultative Network  
Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA)  
Muslim Peace Coalition USA  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
Muslim Students Association of the U.S. and Canada  
Muslims for Peace, Inc.  
National Muslim Law Students Association (NMLSA)  
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)  
New England Muslim Bar Association  
New Jersey Muslim Lawyers Association  
Northern California Islamic Council  
Ohio Muslim Bar Association  
Pakistani American Public Affairs Committee (PAKPAC)  
Somali Action Alliance  
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)  
South Asian Network (SAN)  
Universal Muslim Association of America  
USPAK Foundation  
Women In Islam, Inc.

cc: The Honorable Bennie Thompson, Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security