



CAIR

2026
CIVIL RIGHTS
REPORT

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THE RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT



POLICE
ICE

insure domestic Tran- and our Posterity, We the People

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CAIR is the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization. CAIR's vision is to be a leading advocate for justice and mutual understanding. CAIR's mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, protect civil rights, promote justice, and empower American Muslims. La misión de CAIR es proteger las libertades civiles, mejorar la comprensión del Islam, promover la justicia, y empoderar a los musulmanes en los Estados Unidos.

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This report was completed in early January 2026 and reflects developments up to that point. For references, please see a digital version of the report, references are linked throughout the text.

“Today we honor the bravery and dedication of the Selma protesters in opposing racism and injustice. Facing brutal repression, they stood up for civil rights and helped change the course of history. As we remember them, we urge the government to protect the civil rights of every American and uphold the rights guaranteed to them by our constitution.”

- CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad marking the 60th anniversary of the 1965 Selma march on March 7, 2025.

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The Right to be Different

Freedom includes the right to be different—individually. It is not freedom if people are compelled to conform to someone else’s vision of what Americans must look like, say, or believe.

In 2025, that principle came under pressure. Some powerful political leaders and institutions argued—explicitly or by implication—that “freedom” meant the right to be like them: to speak the approved lines, worship the approved way, and trace ancestry to approved places.

The Department of Labor put the message bluntly in a January, 10, 2026 social media post: "[One Homeland. One People. One Heritage. Remember who you are, American.](#)"

We have been here before. Quotas in the Immigration Act of 1924, also called the Johnson-Reed Act, existed to “[preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity](#),” according to the Department of State’s Office of the Historian. The Act effectively banned immigration from Asia. In a *New York Times* op-ed, Senator David Reed (R-PA), one of the Act’s champions, reportedly “claimed recent immigrants from southern and Eastern European countries had failed to satisfactorily assimilate and championed his recently passed legislation to severely restrict immigration to the United States.” Reed wrote, “[The racial](#)

[composition of America at the present time thus is made permanent.](#)”

Freedom includes the right to be different—individually. It is not freedom if people are compelled to conform to someone else’s vision of what Americans must look like, say, or believe. Protecting the right to be different is not a favor to any one community. It is the operating system of a free country.

By the early Cold War, the costs of race-based immigration policy were increasingly seen as strategic as well as moral, undermining America’s credibility abroad by weakening U.S. claims to democratic leadership, straining relations with allies, and providing Cold War adversaries with propaganda to challenge [American commitments to equality and freedom](#).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, also called the Hart-Celler Act, contributed to reversing these foreign-policy and ethical liabilities. These reforms helped enshrine the notion that in America, you can worship God your way, you can celebrate holidays you like, and you can express your political opinions without having the government treat you as suspicious and outside the circle of protected religious and civic life.

Similarly, politically disfavored speech has been curtailed before.

In the late 1700s the Sedition Act broadly and effectively criminalized "false, scandalous, and malicious writing" against the government. Like today, supporters argued it was needed for national security, but in the end, it was "enforced selectively," mostly against "[critics of the Adams administration](#)." During the Cold War, McCarthyism saw congressional investigations based on often unproven allegations and loyalty tests used to pressure Americans into self-censorship even when speech was lawful. The FBI's COINTELPRO secretly targeted civil rights leaders, antiwar activists, and other political groups through surveillance, harassment, and disinformation.

Public pressure, the courts, and officials pushing back against government overreach have contributed to preserving politically unpopular speech.

On its website, the FBI notes, "COINTELPRO was later rightfully criticized by Congress and [the American people](#) for abridging First Amendment rights and for other reasons." The Senate's Church Commission investigated COINTELPRO and found that "Intelligence agencies have undermined the constitutional rights of citizens primarily because checks and balances designed by the framers of the Constitution to assure [accountability have not been applied](#)." The Vietnam-era Supreme Court ruling in *Tinker v. Des Moines* originated after a school principal suspended students for wearing black armbands to protest the war while at school. In a 7-2 ruling, the court found that students and staff do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or [expression at the schoolhouse gate](#)." Sen. Joseph McCarthy was censured by the Senate in 1954.

Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy during the Army-McCarthy hearings, 1954. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. Public domain.



This report on the status of Muslim civil rights in 2025 argues that a powerful faction is trying to redefine 'American' as a single heritage and a single set of permitted views. We argue that public officials used messaging intended to demonize and dehumanize, executive actions, memos, proclamations, investigations, threats, and their access to tax-payer funds to disqualify Muslim religious identity and political speech about Israel and Palestine—lawful religious and political viewpoints—from American life.

It is a tale familiar to any observer of almost 250 years of struggles to make American democracy work for everyone. American Muslims seeking to contribute to this movement look to Civil War era Abolitionists, Black civil rights leaders, women's suffrage activists, and worker's rights organizers, and see the same fear and bias and fight for the same equal access and neutral legal protections.

The result of the actions of public officials in 2025 is pressure backed by the force of government to conform to their favored viewpoints and punish difference rather than protect it.

Protecting the right to be different is not a favor to any one community. It is the operating system of a free country.

Government actions and official rhetoric treated Muslims—and people who speak up for Palestinian human rights—as suspicious and outside the circle of protected religious and civic life in 2025.

Executive Summary

The central takeaway from 2025 is not that American Muslims lack legal rights, but that equal protection increasingly requires active defense. Across federal, state, and institutional settings, formal legal protections largely remained intact on paper, but their application in practice revealed widening gaps between constitutional guarantees and government behavior.

Government actions and official rhetoric treated Muslims—and people who speak up for Palestinian human rights—as suspicious and outside the circle of protected religious and civic life in 2025.

Government action moves faster than judicial review. As a result, even well-established freedoms such as religious exercise, speech, association, property ownership can be narrowed in practice.

By the end of 2025, the legal status of American Muslims remained formally unchanged, but the conditions under which rights could be exercised had narrowed. Equal access to social opportunities—education, travel, civic participation, and nonprofit activity—was increasingly contingent on political alignment, silence, or litigation capacity. Equal protection depended less on neutral administration and more on after-the-fact judicial correction.

CAIR received 8,683 complaints nationwide in 2025. This is the highest number of single-year complaints CAIR has recorded since our first civil rights report covering 1996 was published. The 8,683 complaints received in 2025 are a 0.3 percent increase from the 8,658 complaints reported in 2024.

Complaint totals alone do not capture the significance of 2025, when many developments operated at a systemic level and affected entire populations rather than producing isolated, reportable incidents. People of Somali descent in Minnesota, the majority of whom are American-born citizens according to federal data, were collectively deemed “garbage” and subjected to immigration enforcement action. Texas Governor Abbott claimed that he banned Islamic religious principles in Texas. The Trump administration framed anyone who holds pro-Palestinian views as inherently threatening and biased, resulting in abductions, visa revocations, and other impacts for immigrants.

CAIR received

8,683

**complaints nationwide
in 2025.**

This report's key developments section documents how elected officials and government agencies have tested constitutional limits and tried to shift public thinking away from fairness and equal rights, and toward fear-based exclusion:

1. Civil-rights violations increasingly occurred through executive actions, memos, proclamations, investigations, or threats, not explicitly discriminatory laws. As a result, the state can claim neutrality – “no faith or viewpoint was banned” – while raising the cost of lawful participation for those who hold disfavored faiths and viewpoints. Rights may exist in law, but they can be weakened in practice through surveillance, zoning fights, investigations, moral panic, and public accusations—methods that have been used against Black Americans, Catholics, Jews, Japanese Americans, and others.
2. Texas Governor Abbott and other state officials used the power of their offices to frame Muslim-led institutions and advocacy as uniquely suspicious and threatening. Their targets included an Islamic center, a proposed mosque-centered development, Muslim burial practices, Islamic mediation services, Islamic schools, and CAIR itself. Governor Abbott claims to have “banned sharia” in Texas—a claim that, in practice,

relies on rhetoric widely used to stigmatize Muslim religious and civic participation in Texas civic life and frame Muslims as existing outside the circle of protected religious and civic engagement.

3. Florida officials, including Governor Ron DeSantis, also used the authority of the state to cast Muslim advocacy and institutions as suspects. This included targeting CAIR, suggesting that Islamic schools may be categorically disqualified from otherwise available public funding, and advancing proposals framed as prohibitions on “sharia.” These efforts raise the risk of lawful Muslim participation in Florida civic life and contribute to a narrative that places Muslims as outside the circle of protected religious and civic engagement.
4. Federal lawmakers introduced bills to effectively ban the practice of Islam in the United States and to ban Muslims from coming to the United States, adopting the sharia ban terminology developed by anti-Muslim extremists in the mid-2000s to mask the outcome of their legislation.¹ At least five pieces of federal legislation designed to implement parts of this ban were introduced. A congressional caucus intended to advance the idea that Muslim religious identity disqualifies people from American life was created. Past sharia ban efforts focused domestically, so

ideological purity tests for non-citizens were added to update the movement for 2025.

5. Government officials used collective guilt and punishment to target both non-citizens and citizens who are perceived to be part of those groups. For this report, three Muslim majority groups—Afghans, Somalis, and Syrians—were targeted. Collective guilt weakens American laws and values that hold individuals, not groups, responsible for their actions.
6. President Trump, his administration, and other public officials framed speech supporting Palestinian human rights as inherently threatening and biased in campaign speeches, executive orders, and other public communications.
 - a. This defamatory framing of lawful political speech supporting Palestinian humanity and opposing Israeli actions was used to justify a number of visa revocations and high-profile arrests based on viewpoints that one group of attorneys characterized as "criticizing Israel in the common and typical ways people criticize foreign countries." The government frequently failed to support its sensational allegations against its targets in court. Procedural irregularities

detailed below—secret visa revocations, lack of notice, transfers far from counsel, and reliance on discretionary Cold War-era provisions—weakened due process protections. A federal judge’s findings in one legal case found government officials “deliberately and with purposeful aforethought” coordinated two federal agencies to “intentionally chill the rights to freedom of speech and peacefully to assemble.”

- b. This framing was also used to initiate civil rights investigations to discipline institutions of higher education and suppress political speech.

Anti-hate incident in Los Angeles. CAIR documented 33 incidents targeting Islamic place of worship in 2025. (Credit: CAIR-LA)



7. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), under the guise of combating Muslim extremism or antisemitism, tried to protect Israel from criticism by implying its nonprofit security grants would not be available to groups who did not agree to self-censor some pro-Palestinian viewpoints. The agency then reportedly considered a blanket ban on such grants to Muslims and subsequently stripped a number of Muslim organizations of grants, invoking a common anti-Muslim stereotype as a thinly veiled pretext.
8. A number of civil rights issues arising from the well-documented wave of Islamophobia post October 2023 and its impacts on Muslim and pro-Palestinian voices saw scant enforcement actions.

American Muslims and allied institutions exercised agency through legal action, public advocacy, and institutional engagement. Litigation proved relatively effective in asserting constitutional boundaries, with courts repeatedly rejecting censorship and viewpoint discrimination while protecting some rights to privacy. These interventions demonstrated that formal legal protections remain operative—with the caveat that litigation is often reactive rather than preventive. Courts and public pressure provided partial correctives, largely after harm had occurred and often at the very latest stages:

1. Palestine Legal and CAIR announced a settlement agreement for their client, University of Maryland Students for Justice in Palestine (UMD SJP), with the University of Maryland (UMD) after winning a court ruling against the



Muslim and Jewish leaders continued to speak against Israel's occupation, apartheid, and genocide even as the Trump administration sought to frame speech supporting Palestinian human rights as inherently threatening and biased. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

school. UMD officials had likely engaged in a long U.S. tradition of justifying silencing disfavored speech—in this instance, anti-genocide voices—by citing the potential for public disorder—in this instance, threats made by pro-Israel individuals. The \$100,000 settlement was the largest ever secured for pro-Palestine student protesters.

2. CAIR-NY and Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP announced a civil rights victory after a federal lawsuit against Suffolk County, NY resulted in a \$225,000 settlement and policy reforms protecting religious head coverings for persons in police custody.
3. DHS ended the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) "Quiet Skies" traveler surveillance program, a costly and discriminatory failure that operated for 15 years without statutory authority.
4. CAIR-NY, CAIR National, and the law firm of Dratel & Lewis intervened on behalf of Mahmoud Khalil and other plaintiffs after a Congressional committee demanded that Columbia University turn over personal information that likely involved hundreds of students. Columbia has not furnished any records to the federal

government since a Court order was issued in response to the lawsuit. Columbia is, in fact, banned from providing any student records to the federal government without first notifying the Court.

5. In two high profile cases, the American public chose to be represented in government by Muslims, rejecting the idea that being Muslim disqualifies a person from public service. Voters in New York City selected Zohran Mamdani as the first Muslim mayor of America's largest city. Voters in Virginia selected Ghazala Hashmi as their lieutenant governor, making her the first Muslim woman elected to a statewide office in American history.

For Americans concerned with limited government, equal treatment under the law, and constitutional restraint, these developments raise broader questions. Systems that rely on suspicion, discretionary power, and after-the-fact correction do not remain confined to one community. The long-term health of American democracy depends on whether rules are applied evenly—and whether rights are protected before, not after, they are tested.

Data Findings

Incoming Complaint Data Findings

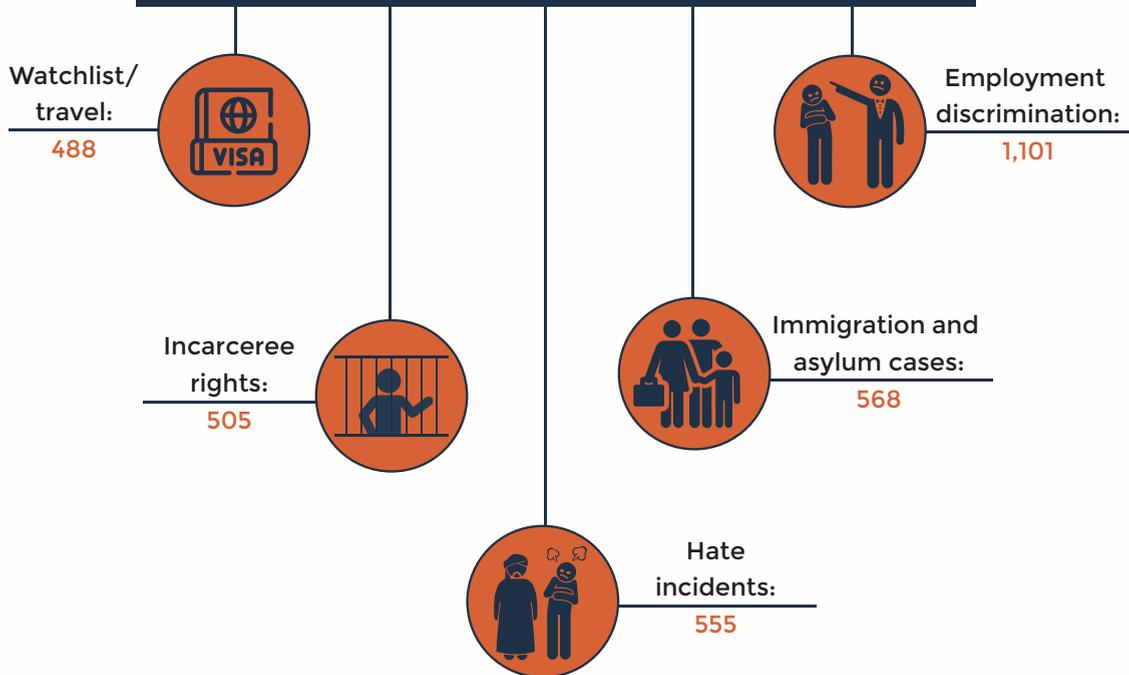
1. CAIR received 8,683 complaints nationwide in 2025. This is the highest number of single-year complaints CAIR has recorded since our first civil rights report covering 1996 was published.
2. The 8,683 complaints received in 2025 are a 0.3 percent increase from the 8,658 complaints reported in 2024.
3. Previously, the highest recorded number of complaints occurred in 2024.
4. At 12.7 percent of our total, employment discrimination is the highest-reported bias complaint category to CAIR for the second year in a row. The 1,101 complaints in 2025 were down from the 1,329 employment discrimination complaints we received in 2024 (15.4 percent of 2024 total).
5. Immigration/asylum discrimination (568 complaints, or 6.5 percent), hate incidents (555 complaints, or 6.4 percent), incarcerated rights (505, or 5.8 percent), and watchlist/travel (488 or 5.6 percent) round out the other top five highest-reported bias categories.²
6. CAIR received 198 complaints that were typed as hate crimes in 2025. The [Federal Bureau of Investigation's Crime Data Explorer](#) shows 191 anti-Islamic (Muslim) incidents in 2025, 260 in 2024 and 283 in 2023. This is no way to discern which incidents are duplicate and which were reported only to one of the two institutions.³
7. CAIR-Minnesota reported 693 complaints in 2025, a 96 percent increase over the 353 complaints they reported in 2024. One hundred and fifty-eight (158) of these complaints, 23 percent of their year total, were recorded in December. This coincides with President Trump referring to Somalis as “garbage” on December 3 and the subsequent launch of Operation Metro Surge in early December.
8. CAIR-Chicago reported 877 complaints in 2025, a 65 percent increase over the 531 complaints they reported in 2024.
9. Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Texas have all seen increasing complaints in each of the last three years.

IN 2025 CAIR RECEIVED A TOTAL OF

8,683

THE HIGHEST SINGLE-YEAR TOTAL SINCE TRACKING BEGAN IN 1996

Complaints



IN 2025



CAIR-MINNESOTA received

693 complaints
statewide

96 percent more than 2024



CAIR-CHICAGO received

877 complaints
statewide

65 percent more than 2024

OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS

Complaints have increased each year in
**FLORIDA, ILLINOIS, MINNESOTA,
OKLAHOMA, AND TEXAS.**

Islamic Place of Worship Incident Data

CAIR identified 33 incidents explicitly targeting Islamic institutions, including mosques, Islamic community centers, or other spaces self-identified as a Muslim place of worship in 2025⁴. The incidents do not include private residences, but would include prayer spaces like airport meditation rooms and Jummah or Eid-only locations if the incident is understood to be Islamophobic in nature. To be included, an objective observer should be able to reasonably conclude that a bias incident occurred⁵. All reports are sourced from publicly available information, including traditional media or social media posts. CAIR staff are often aware of other incidents.

In Texas, incidents involving the East Plano Islamic Center’s proposed residential neighborhood, then named EPIC City, often centered the development. As such, many of the incidents do not fit our definition of a mosque incident and are addressed elsewhere.

In Minnesota, we noted four concerning incidents that we are monitoring but have not yet included⁶.

In California, over several days a person using the Google Maps profile “Robert Olivieri” posted a series, containing at least 78 separate posts, of alarming and threatening [videos targeting dozens of California mosques](#). Most of

the at least six videos contain extreme anti-Muslim views such as alleging that Muslims support pedophilia, adultery, and violence. The man in the videos alleges Muslims are “trying to overthrow government, insert sharia law,” apparently threatens the community, saying “Islam... you guys are not going to make it.” Other inflammatory and hateful commentary includes an admonition to “S**t on a Quran. That’s what we do. We take s****s on Qurans.” For purposes of this report, CAIR researchers counted his effort as one incident to minimize the risk that this one individual’s energetic bigotry is interpreted as a national surge.

CAIR-Minnesota delegates at the capitol, Washington D.C. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)



2025 Islamic Place of Worship Incidents by Type

Damage, destruction, or vandalism (DDV)	9
Harassment	12
Intimidation	9
Zoning	3
Total	33

Damage-Destruction-Vandalism (DDV): Incidents involving property damage or physical injury to people.

Harassment: Uninvited or unwelcome demonstrations or acts that involve Islamophobic slurs. This category includes verbal harassment and/or assault, such as being called a “terrorist.”

Intimidation: An escalation of harassment to threats of violence, for example, threatening to kill Muslims; or speech that appears intended to make a person fearful for their safety, or other acts not involving property damage that are apparently intended to cause fear in those targeted by the act. This category includes armed anti-Islam demonstrations, brandishing weapons, placing severed pigs’ heads on mosque property, and plans to conduct an attack that were not operationalized.

Zoning: Islamophobic issues raised during zoning proceedings. An incident is included in the zoning category only if bias is clearly identified in zoning proceedings. Places of worship of many faiths routinely face opposition from neighbors due to traffic or land use concerns.

Given the vagaries of hate crimes laws and the sometimes reluctance to prosecute anti-Muslim racism as a hate crime, inclusion is not dependent on law enforcement charging the incident as a hate crime. Since mosques are gathering places, the incident may involve either the facility being targeted or people.

A defining feature of 2025 was the increased use of discretionary authority—executive proclamations, emergency powers, immigration discretion, regulatory investigations, and funding conditions—to achieve outcomes that would likely fail under traditional evidentiary or judicial scrutiny.

Observations on the Incoming Complaint, Islamic Place of Worship Incident, and Key Development Findings

A defining feature of 2025 was the increased use of discretionary authority—executive proclamations, emergency powers, immigration discretion, regulatory investigations, and funding conditions—to achieve outcomes that would likely fail under traditional evidentiary or judicial scrutiny. Rather than proving wrongdoing through courts, state actors often relied on their public microphone, investigations, proclamations, or administrative actions that imposed real consequences without adjudication. This approach weakened due process norms and shifted the burden of defense onto targeted individuals or institutions.

Complaint totals alone, even the highest number ever recorded by our organization, do not capture the significance of 2025, when many developments operated at a systemic level and affected entire populations rather than producing isolated, reportable incidents. For Muslims, equal access to social opportunities—education, travel, civic participation, nonprofit activity—was increasingly contingent on political alignment, silence, or litigation capacity. Equal protection depended less on neutral

administration and more on after-the-fact judicial correction.

In Texas and Florida, public officials invoked fear-based rhetoric associated with “sharia” and paired it with official power to marginalize Muslim-led institutions and advocacy. Through a combination of exclusionary messaging and state action, officials advanced policies and designations that push Muslims toward the margins of protected religious and civic life.

Five bills aimed at banning Islam from the U.S. were introduced in Congress by high-ranking federal officials who have among them claimed Islam is not a religion but a cult or political ideology and have supported the destruction of mainstream Muslims.

The Trump administration defined and treated pro-Palestinian viewpoints as a threat to national security and as evidence of support for a sanctioned organization.

As a result, many immigrants saw their visas revoked and faced sensational allegations of wrongdoing that were often not subsequently supported in court.

Under the stated justification of combating antisemitism, federal authorities investigated institutions of higher learning in ways that raised concerns about efforts to chill free speech, academic freedom, and criticism of Israel. CAIR intervened when the U.S.

House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce demanded that Columbia University produce student or student-worker disciplinary records that would likely have involved the private records of hundreds of students. As a condition for restoring federal funding, Northwestern University agreed to abandon its prior commitment to establish a temporary space for Middle Eastern and North African and Muslim students.

Officials applied collective suspicion to Afghans, Somalis, and Syrians rather than relying on individualized assessments.

Staff at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reportedly tried to protect Israel from criticism by implying that its nonprofit security grants would not be available to groups who did not agree to self-censor some pro-Palestinian viewpoints. The agency then reportedly considered a blanket ban on such grants to Muslims and subsequently stripped a number of Muslim organizations of grants. This action was justified using allegations that paint Muslims as inherently suspicious.

Anti-Muslim narratives resurfaced in 2025 after 2024 was dominated by backlash against pro-Palestinian views.

In 2024, we reflected that since our first report documenting anti-Muslim bigotry in the wake of 1995's Oklahoma City bombing, CAIR's civil rights reports had told the story of American Muslims being targeted due to their faith. In [2024 we found a different theme](#): Muslims— along

with Palestinians, Arabs, Jews, African Americans, Asian Americans and others— were targeted due to their antigencide and anti-apartheid viewpoints.

These viewpoints were central to anti-Muslim discrimination. As a result, it became difficult to untangle when false allegations of supporting extremism relied on Islamophobic or anti-Palestinian racist stereotypes.

Anti-Muslim narratives more clearly resurfaced in 2025, particularly the notion that the religious principles followed by Muslims are inherently threatening and anti-American. Ghazala Hashmi, who became the first Muslim Lieutenant Governor in Virginia, summed up how Islamic principles inform her public service: "In Islam, we're commanded to take care of those who are sick among us, to feed the hungry, to provide shelter to those who have no housing, to take care of the orphan and provide education to the young, to care for our elders. I take those basic guidelines and translate them [into the policy choices](#)."

By February, Texas Governor Abbott was instigating a campaign against Muslim life in Texas while claiming he banned sharia – a claim which, in practice, relies on rhetoric widely used to stigmatize Muslim religious and civic participation in Texas civic life and which frames Muslims as outside the circle of protected religious and civic engagement. Five bills aimed at banning Islam from the U.S. were introduced in the U.S. Congress. Rep.

Brandon Gill (R-TX) called Islam, "[a political ideology](#)." Alabama Senator Tommy Tuberville claimed, "[Islam is not a religion. It is a cult](#)." Rep. Randy Fine (R-FL) [called for the destruction of mainstream Muslims](#). In a speech at Turning Point USA's AmericaFest in December, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard claimed that American Muslims are working to impose "sharia law" and "Islamic principles" across America through the "use of laws or violence," specifically citing the cities of Paterson, New Jersey, and Houston, Texas.

Twenty-three percent of CAIR-Minnesota's year total came in December, fueling a 96 percent increase in complaints in 2025 over 2024. In November, President Trump posted to the right-wing social media site Truth Social that he was terminating Temporary Protected Status, a special immigration designation for peoples whose countries are experiencing natural disaster or war, for Somalis in the U.S. "effective immediately." He does not have the authority to do this. When asked about this point, DHS Secretary Noem said the agency would [follow process](#). The Congressional Research Service reported, "As of March 31, 2025, 705 nationals of Somalia were [covered by TPS according to USCIS](#)." The TPS cancellation was largely symbolic; even if it applied only to just TPS recipients in Minnesota, it would have impacted only .007 percent of the Minnesota Somali population. Federal data shows that 58 percent

of the estimated 107,000 people of Somali descent in Minnesota are American born. Of those Somalis who were born outside of the U.S., 87 percent are [naturalized citizens](#).

In a speech delivered on December 3, President Trump referred to Somalis as "garbage" and said that they should be sent "back to where they came from." Operation Metro Surge, an operation which started in the Twin Cities and later expanded statewide, and which was characterized by a severe escalation in the brutality of ICE officers, launched shortly thereafter."

On December 18, Free Speech for People and CAIR-MN sent a letter to multiple Minnesota officials asking them to open criminal investigations into the unlawful actions of federal agents operating in the Twin Cities and throughout the state, including racially profiling and kidnapping U.S. citizens.

Twenty-three percent of CAIR-Minnesota's year total came in December, fueling a 96 percent increase in complaints in 2025 over 2024.

In two high profile cases, the American public chose to be represented in government by Muslims, rejecting the idea that being Muslim disqualifies a person from public service. Voters in New York City selected Zohran Mamdani as their mayor. Mamdani won 50 percent of the vote in a three-way race, [eight points ahead of his nearest competitor](#). Voters in Virginia selected Ghazala Hashmi as their lieutenant governor. Hashmi won 56 percent of the vote, [beating her competitor by 12 points](#). Reps. Randy Fine (R-FL) and Andy Ogles (R-TN) called for the deportation or denaturalization of Zohran Mamdani simply because he sought to serve New Yorkers as their mayor.

The low political cost of deploying Islamophobia to achieve political outcomes, as a well as a foreign

nation's self-interest in shaping American public opinion, likely helped to drive the invigorated appetite to treat Muslims—and people who speak up for Palestinian human rights—as suspicious and outside the circle of protected religious and civic life in 2025.

Deploying Islamophobia to achieve political goals is not always a winning tactic. New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani and Virginia Lieutenant Governor Ghazala Hashmi are both clear examples of this truth.

Equally, anti-Muslim extremism is not currently viewed as a politically costly tactic. Reps. Brandon Gill (R-TX), Chip Roy (R-TX), Keith Self (R-TX), Andy Ogles (R-TN), and Randy Fine (R-FL), as well as Alabama Sen. Tommy Tuberville, all made statements about Islam and Muslims in 2025 that CAIR believes would be career-ending were



When proponents of harmful policies find themselves facing a strong, united front, public pressure can dismantle even deeply entrenched positions. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

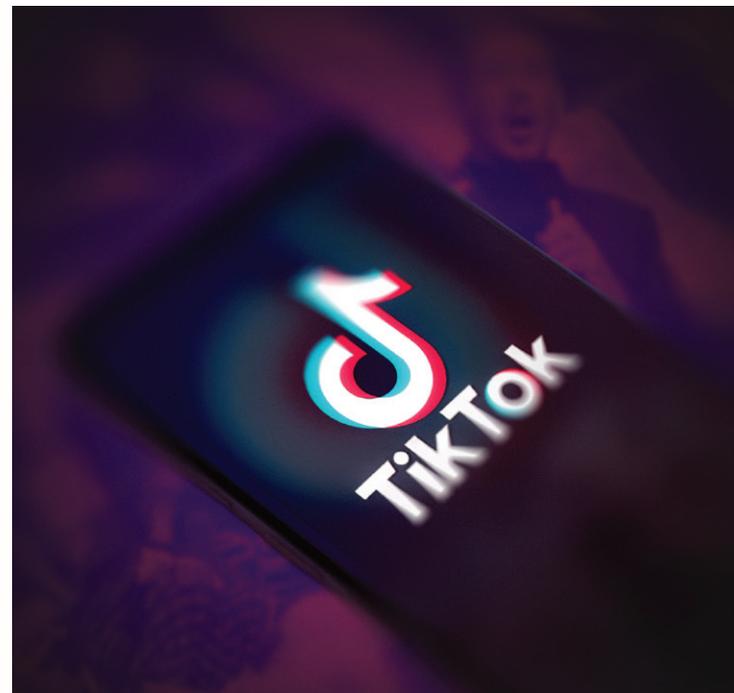
they directed at other faiths. As this report was finalized in late January 2026, Rasmussen Reports released the results of a poll that CAIR believes deployed both politically charged wording and a threat narrative about Muslims: “How concerned are you about the influence of radical Islam in the United States?” CAIR believes such polling is more interested in shaping narratives and testing possible campaign messages than [neutral public opinion measurement](#).

President Trump’s first presidential campaign centered his proposal to ban Muslims from coming to the U.S. In 2016, he described Somali refugee resettlement as a “disaster” for Minnesota and claimed—without evidence—that [Somali refugees were bringing crime and cultural incompatibility](#).

His 2024 campaign included a promise to restore his “[Muslim travel ban](#).” At the same time, President Trump [stood onstage with a number of Detroit-area Muslim leaders during his 2024 campaign](#) and later [picked the Muslim mayor of Dearborn Heights and the Muslim Mayor of Hamtramck for ambassadorships](#). In something of a pragmatic turn, when asked why Somali Americans should support his 2024 presidential candidacy [he responded](#), “Because they want safety, they want security ... they want security just like everybody else.”

In late 2025, after an Afghan man horrifically attacked two national guardsmen in Washington, DC, murdering one, President Trump described Somalis as “garbage.”

Evidence indicates that after the Israeli government voted to expand funding for its “consciousness warfare” efforts, creating fear of Muslims counts among Israel’s best tactics to [counter growing calls for accountability for its Gaza genocide](#). Several PR firms have since filed Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) paperwork announcing projects on behalf of Israel which target American public opinion. In addition, CAIR believes the forced [sale of TikTok’s U.S. operations](#) to a consortium of investors led by Oracle’s pro-Israel billionaires Larry Ellison and Safra Catz represents an attempt to silence young Americans who used the platform to learn about and oppose the Israeli government’s genocide in Gaza.



Key Developments and Trends Impacting Muslim Civil Rights in 2025

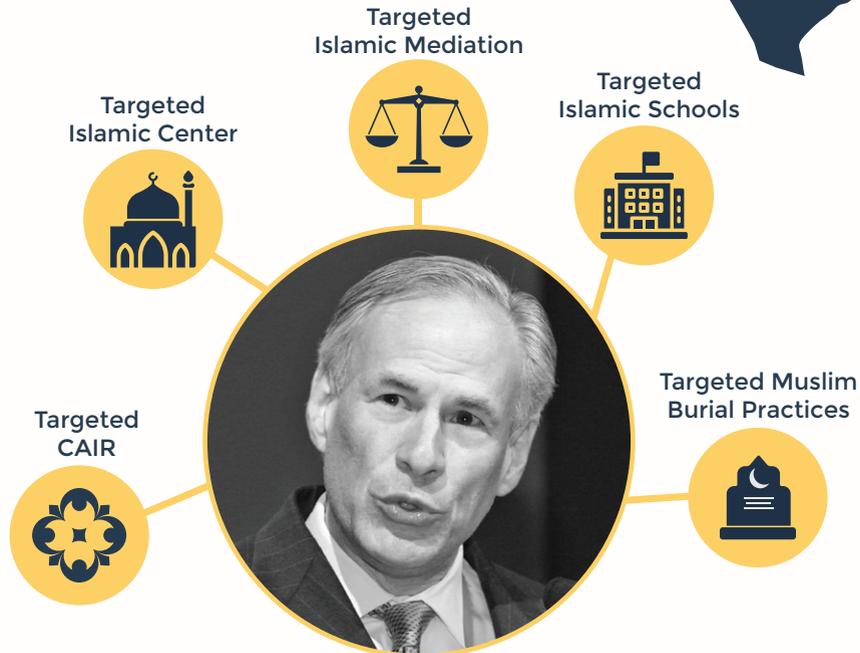
These sections examine how civil rights protections were applied to Muslim individuals and institutions in the United States during 2025. They evaluate how laws, policies, and government actions operate in practice and what those outcomes reveal about the broader health of American civil rights.

(TX) From Cemeteries to Classrooms: How Texas Government Power Was Weaponized Against Muslim Life in 2025⁷

Snapshot: Texas Governor Abbott claimed he banned sharia in his state. Gov. Abbott and other state officials used the power of their offices to frame Muslim-led institutions and advocacy as uniquely suspicious and threatening, raising the risk of lawful Muslim participation in Texas life, and frame Muslims as outside the circle of protected religious and civic life. The attack targeted an Islamic Center, a proposed mosque-centered development, Muslim burial practices, Islamic mediation services, Islamic schools, and CAIR. Official findings repeatedly failed to back up public

official's claims. Similar projects grounded in other faith traditions were not equally attacked. Though offered evidence of possible anti-Muslim civil rights violations by state officials, Abbott appears not to have ordered an investigation of that behavior.

In 2025, Texas Governor Greg Abbott used the power of the state to carry out a broad campaign against Muslim religious life. By the end of the year, a proposed mosque-centered development, Muslim burial practices, mediation services, schools, and advocacy organizations had all been targeted through investigations, official proclamations, and public accusations.



TEXAS GOVERNOR ABBOTT

claimed he banned sharia in his state.

SNAPSHOT: Texas Governor Abbott claimed he banned sharia in his state. Gov. Abbott and other state officials used the power of their offices to frame Muslim-led institutions and advocacy as uniquely suspicious and threatening, raising the risk of lawful Muslim participation in Texas life, and frame Muslims as outside the circle of protected religious and civic life. The attack targeted an Islamic Center, a proposed mosque-centered development, Muslim burial practices, Islamic mediation services, Islamic schools, and CAIR. Official findings repeatedly failed to back up public official's claims. Similar projects grounded in other faith traditions were not equally attacked. Though offered evidence of possible anti-Muslim civil rights violations by state officials, Abbott appears not to have ordered an investigation of that behavior.

This effort relied not on proven violations but on the use of the power and high profile of his office to cast suspicion. Official findings repeatedly failed to back up the claims: The Department of Justice (DOJ) found no civil rights violations in the proposed mosque-centered development; a fair housing complaint involving Community Capital Partners was resolved through a settlement, with the developer admitting no wrongdoing; and an investigation into Muslim burial practices instead revealed possible civil rights violations by state officials themselves after anti-Muslim content was shared internally. There is no evidence that Gov. Abbott ordered an investigation into the Islamophobic content.

Gov. Abbott claimed he has banned sharia in Texas. He did not similarly claim to have banned Catholic canon law or halacha (Jewish law). Abbott launched a broad attack on a proposed Muslim-led community development project. He appears to have neither raised concerns nor called for investigations into [Veritatis Splendor](#), a similar Christian-led community development project proposed for Tyler, Texas. Gov. Abbott shared a social media post that claimed, “Islam is a militant ideology cloaked in religious rhetoric, with a clear mandate to destroy the west.”

Like other racial, religious, and ethnic minorities throughout U.S. history, the community pushed back through lawsuits, public advocacy, and civic participation. Many of these disputes

are still unresolved, but together they point to a broader pattern: Rights may exist in law, but they can be weakened in practice through surveillance, zoning fights, investigations, moral panic, and public accusations—methods that have been used against Black Americans, Catholics, Jews, Japanese Americans, and others.

What is at stake are basic constitutional protections: free speech, freedom of association, and protection from arbitrary government labeling. When religious identity alone becomes a reason for government scrutiny, the rights of all Texans—to own property, take part in civic life, and speak freely—are put at risk.

[Investigating a Proposed Mosque-Centered Neighborhood](#)

In late February, Gov. Abbott and Attorney General Paxton started attacking a planned residential community centered on a mosque. Gov. Abbott [claimed he had already banned sharia in Texas. He posted on X](#), “To be clear, Sharia law is not allowed in Texas. Nor are Sharia cities. Nor are ‘no go zones’ which this project seems to imply. Bottom line: The project as proposed in the video is not allowed in Texas.”

Gov. Abbott's opening salvo included [a reshare of one of anti-Muslim activist Amy Mek's posts](#). He subsequently deleted the reshare. A month later, he announced that a ["dozen state agencies are investigating"](#) the residential neighborhood proposal.

This included Gov. Abbott directing the Texas Rangers to investigate "[potential criminal activities](#)."

Writing in April, [journalist Benjamin Wermund observed](#), "Abbott has not intervened against past religiously affiliated developments, including Veritatis Splendor, a massive Catholic community founded in East Texas in 2021." However, he continued, "Right-wing activists have been pestering Abbott for months online to take action to stop EPIC."

A video announcing the now renamed EPIC City project was posted on April 7, 2024. The original video has been removed, but [a version](#) was still available on YouTube as of December 23, 2025. The video represented the project's vision prior to any political intervention. It appears to be intended to generate interest in a target audience that finds living near an Islamic place of worship appealing. At the same time the voiceover described the project as a place "where we celebrate diversity and promote unity." "Our community," the narrator adds, "is designed to foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity for all residents, regardless of their background. We believe that everyone deserves a safe and comfortable place to call home. And we are committed to creating a welcoming environment where all residents can live in harmony."

Behind the project was Community Capital Partners and the East Plano Islamic Center (EPIC). An Islamophobic hate group, the one

which Gov. Abbott shared in his initial and subsequently deleted social media post, appears to have inspired the attack. Rise Align Ignite Reclaim (RAIR) founder Amy Mek has reportedly spread anti-Muslim and antisemitic hate, including Mek [encouraging her followers to follow a man who "openly praises Adolf Hitler and denies the Holocaust happened."](#)

Gov. Abbott later shared content from another anti-Muslim extremist; in that case, the reshared content says, "Islam is a militant ideology cloaked in religious rhetoric, with a clear mandate to destroy the west."

In an April 14, 2025 letter to U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi and Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon, CAIR staff observed that Gov. Abbott and Texas Attorney General Paxton's attack on EPIC City "is a discriminatory act that appears to violate the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause, the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause, and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA). RLUIPA bars government entities from imposing land use restrictions that substantially burden religious exercise unless they can demonstrate a compelling interest pursued through the least restrictive means. These protections apply equally to mosques, synagogues, churches, and other religious institutions. Moreover, [any state or federal investigation launched without credible justification raises serious concerns under the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause.](#)

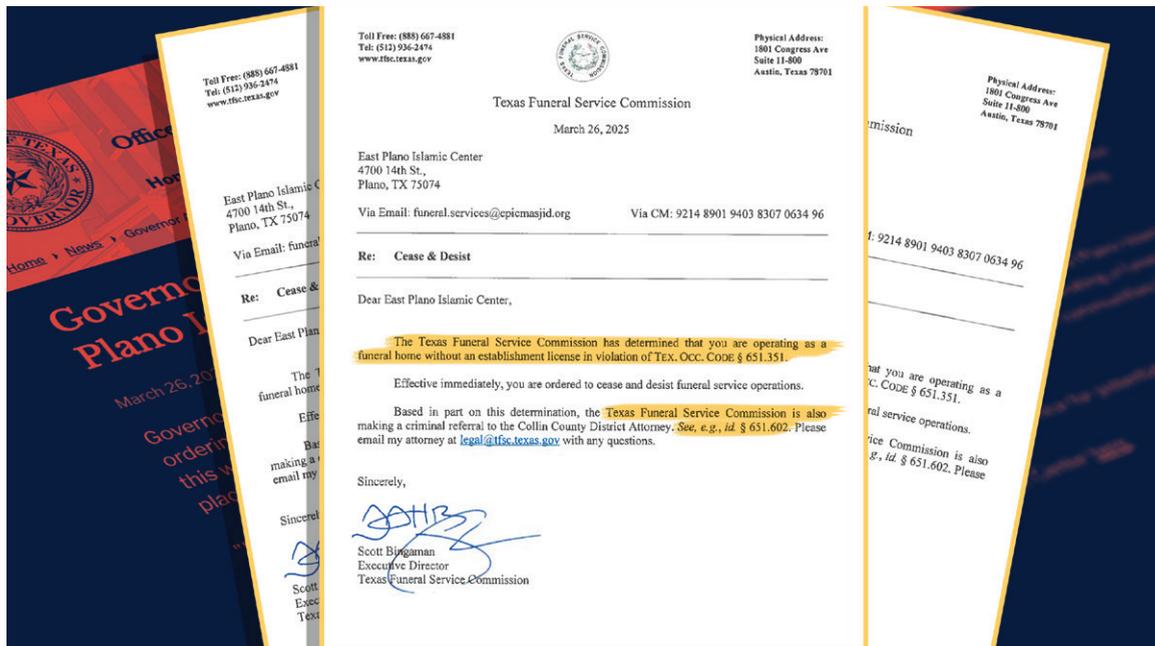
[which prohibits arbitrary government action](#). There is no reason to assume EPIC has violated any laws or regulations. Rather, these politically motivated inquiries appear designed to chill Muslim civic engagement and religious freedom. This is precisely the kind of discriminatory behavior the Constitution and federal civil rights statutes were enacted to prevent.”

After Texas Senator John Cornyn called for the Federal government to investigate EPIC City, [the San Antonio Current reported](#), “The DOJ formally notified EPIC City developer Community Capital Partners [CCP] in a June 13 [2025] letter that it found no civil rights violations involving the proposed project.” In September, the Texas Workforce Commission and Community Capital

Partners entered into a negotiated resolution, ["dismissing allegations](#) that EPIC City will discriminate against non-Muslims in violation of the Texas Fair Housing Act." Community Capital Partners [admitting no wrongdoing in that settlement](#).

Funerary Practices

On March 26, the Texas Funeral Services Commission (TFSC) sent a [cease-and-desist letter](#) to the East Plano Islamic Center (EPIC) asserting that the commission had "determined you are operating a funeral home without an establishment license in violation of TEX. OCC. CODE §651.351." The move, announced by Gov. Abbott's office, came the day after Texas Attorney General Paxton had announced he was investigating EPIC City.



After sending the above letter, the TFSC later changed course and said, "If TFSC received credible information," implying none was ever actually received.

In its analysis of the TFSC's allegation, news outlet KERA reported, "EPIC did have a license, which expired in 2022. But the mosque's website shows it partners with Rahma Funeral Homes to provide funeral services – [which is licensed](#) and has been since 2004, according to the state's Online Licensing System."

EPIC in turn sued the commission, "claiming it is selectively enforcing rules on Muslim burial rites at the group's mosque at the behest of state leaders," [according to the Houston Chronicle](#).

Reporting subsequently did reveal potential civil rights violations, by the Texas Funeral Services Commission.

In May, [TFSC Presiding Officer Kristin Tips](#) shared anti-Muslim content with the former executive director of the commission Scott Bingaman. The content [included an image of one of the state's only Muslim legislators](#) who was on a committee considering a bill Tips supported. It also included a graphic full of misrepresentations about Islam, which apparently prompted Bingaman to respond, "Not a fan... tough to be tolerant when taught hate." At the time, the commission faced two other lawsuits and later saw Bingaman fired. [Bingaman later alleged that Tips](#) was "using her position to improperly lobby for funeral company interests at the Capitol," according to the Houston Chronicle.

In mid-July, TFSC wrote to EPIC, saying, "[If TFSC received credible information](#) suggesting that any of the

mentioned [funerary] activities are being performed in a manner not in compliance with Texas law, we will notify your counsel promptly..."

The "if" implies no such evidence had been received, a very different position from the commission's initial letter notifying EPIC it had "determined" that a violation had occurred.

CAIR called on Gov. Abbott to launch a probe for potential civil rights violations by TFSC. He did not.

Unconstitutional Proclamation

In November, Gov. Abbott issued a proclamation declaring CAIR and another unrelated Muslim group as "foreign terrorist organizations." The move banned the groups from purchasing property in Texas. In [the lawsuit discussed below](#), attorneys representing CAIR note that Gov. Abbott "asserts that this designation enables 'heightened penalties' under Texas law for association with and promotion or aid of CAIR and its activities." Further, it "enables Defendant [State Attorney General Ken] Paxton to act against CAIR, its affiliates, and 'any persons promoting or aiding their criminal activities' without first providing due process."

America's founders built due process into our legal system to protect individuals from arbitrary government actions. So, when the Texas government labeled a Muslim organization a criminal by proclamation, without taking them to court and proving Texas' evidence, this raised civil rights questions.

The Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA), the CAIR Legal Defense Fund (CAIR LDF), and Akeel & Valentine, PLC filed a federal lawsuit against Abbott and Paxton to block enforcement of Abbott's proclamation, asserting it "is based on disfavored viewpoints, unsupported assertions, and no evidence of Plaintiffs' wrongdoing."

In the lawsuit, attorneys argue, in part, that Gov. Abbott bypassed due process and that CAIR and its chapters "are entitled to a right to be heard and a meaningful opportunity to respond regarding deprivation or harm to their liberty and property interests."

The attorneys also noted that CAIR and its chapters "are domestic organizations that operate exclusively in the United States." They are not foreign.

Paxton's legal [response came in late December](#). Instead of defending the merits of Gov Abbott's proclamation, Paxton argued that the proclamation does not apply to CAIR's Texas chapters and that they therefore cannot sue to block its enforcement, that the Attorney General is immune from being sued because he has not yet taken any action against CAIR, and

that the court should not rule on the order's constitutionality at all because, he claims, it raises a "political question" that courts cannot resolve.

Islamic Arbitration and Mediation Courts

In November, Gov. Abbott demanded that [state district attorneys investigate "sharia courts."](#) Abbott's target this time was the Islamic Tribunal. "The Islamic Tribunal," that group wrote in response to Abbott's 2025 demand, "[only handles mediation and arbitration in family law issues, which are then referred to Texas courts for final enforcement and ruling.](#)"

The freedom to choose non-binding out-of-court faith services is normal and noncontroversial. Adherents of both the Christian and Jewish faith have long turned to institutions providing similar services for guidance in unfortunate times. In its coverage of Gov. Abbott's demand, The Jerusalem Post [named two](#): "The Institute for Christian Conciliation, which says online it resolves disputes in a 'biblical manner, and The Beth Din of America, which describes itself as a rabbinical court 'firmly anchored in the principles of halacha (Jewish law).'"

Reporting on [what was believed to be the first such service for Texas Muslims in 2015](#), CBS 11 News noted the tribunal would offer "services to handle case[s] involving divorce, business problems, and other disputes among the community." At the time, Imam Moujahed Bakhach said, "We have no

authority to force anybody” or make their rulings binding if participants “don't like it or don't [accept] it.”

Islamic Schools

In late December, Texas' Acting Comptroller Kelly Hancock asked state Attorney General Paxton if certain Islamic Schools could be denied vouchers ["based on connections to a U.S. Muslim advocacy group or alleged ties to the Chinese government."](#) According to the report, the Muslim advocacy group's connection was students receiving [orientation about their civil rights](#).

In their commentary on the issue, the Austin American Statesman's editorial board observed, "All of the schools Hancock cast suspicion on have been accredited by Cognia, an organization approved to certify private schools by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC). The Texas Education Agency has recognized TEPSAC's accreditation authority since 1986. Senate Bill 2, the 2025 law establishing the voucher program, says the comptroller shall approve funding for schools accredited by an organization recognized by TEPSAC. That's a long walk to reach a simple conclusion: Hancock, who co-authored SB 2 as a state senator, [is now asking the attorney general's office to approve a misreading of the law he helped write.](#)"

Sharia Banned in Texas?

In 2017, [Texas legislators passed and Governor Abbott enacted House Bill 45](#). The bill applied to family law proceedings and "protected against violations of constitutional rights and public policy in the application of foreign law and the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments." At the time, the conservative Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) reported that the bill was an ["American Laws for American Courts"](#) bill. Breitbart also [identified it as an ALAC template](#)⁸.

In September, Gov. Abbott again claimed that he had signed laws banning “Sharia law” and “Sharia compounds” in Texas. In a [post on X](#), he urged Texans to “report” anyone who attempts to impose “Sharia compliance” to law enforcement.

Gov. Abbott was referring to both the 2017 law and [House Bill 4211](#), a measure enacted in June requiring business entities in residential developments to disclose certain investment structures. Abbott's press secretary, Andrew Mahaleris, [told a news outlet that the bill](#) served to ensure no one could "impose Sharia law in Texas or create 'no go zones.'"

The No Go Zones conspiracy theory, used also by Texas Senator Ted Cruz, claims that Muslims in Europe have set up so-called “no-go zones” that people of other faiths and police are not allowed to enter. Numerous [debunks of the concept exist](#). In 2015, [Fox News was forced to apologize several](#)

[times](#) for a similar “no-go zone” claim made by self-proclaimed “terrorism expert” Steven Emerson. In response to Emerson’s claim, then British Prime Minister David Cameron said: “Frankly I choked on my porridge and thought it must be April’s Fools Day. This guy is clearly a complete idiot.”

In December, Mayor Armin Mizani of Keller, Texas was reported to have signed a proclamation “affirming constitutional supremacy, American sovereignty, and [rejection of foreign legal systems](#).” On X (formerly Twitter), Mizani made sure audiences understood the proclamation’s target, “In Keller, we are governed by American law, NEVER foreign legal systems like [Sharia law or Sharia courts](#).” He also said, “Texans should never apologize for our heritage or our values; instead, we should fight for them.” The Keller City Council later decided to [abandon the proposal](#). In a statement at the time, CAIR-DFW Executive Director Mustafaa Carroll said: “These anti-Muslim publicity stunts have nothing to do with real governance and everything to do with political posturing.”

Texas AG Sues EPIC and Others

One of the dozens of investigations of EPIC Abbott had alluded to earlier in the year was conducted by the Texas State Securities Board (TSSB). After months of review, state officials concluded that no securities violations occurred.

In December, Texas Attorney General Paxton filed suit against EPIC [alleging securities fraud](#). Paxton had written to the TSSB in mid-October inviting [them to review his evidence](#).

A December 6 Fox News article about Paxton’s lawsuit asserted that “Texas Securities Commissioner Travis Iles claimed the East Plano Islamic Center (EPIC) entities sold securities without meeting registration or exemption requirements and referred the matter to the Office of the Attorney General after identifying flagrant violations.”

The Securities Commissioner issued a statement refuting the Fox News’ claim.

[In its statement](#), TSSB notes that Paxton’s letter inviting them to review his evidence was sent after a press release announcing it had been issued, that TSSB staff had asked to see the evidence “within minutes” of learning of the press release, and that “to date, neither Securities Commissioner Iles nor the staff of the TSSB have been provided with corresponding evidence to review.”



(MD) Federal Court Rejects Threat-Driven Censorship of Pro-Palestinian Students at UMD

Snapshot: University of Maryland officials likely engaged in a long U.S. tradition of justifying silencing disfavored speech—in this instance anti-genocide voices—by citing the potential for public disorder based on threats made by pro-Israel individuals. A judge intervened against this censorship of the student's lawful activity following a lawsuit filed by Palestine Legal and CAIR. The event proceeded and the student group was awarded \$100,000.

In August, Palestine Legal and CAIR announced a [\\$100,000 settlement](#) agreement for their client, University of Maryland Students for Justice in Palestine (UMD SJP), paid by the University of Maryland (UMD).

The settlement marks the highest financial penalty known to be imposed on a U.S. university for violating pro-Palestinian students' free speech rights. The incident represents a long tradition of justifying silencing disfavored speech by citing the potential for public disorder. University administration's censorship of the student's lawful activity due to threats made by pro-Israel individuals was only reversed because a judge intervened.



University of Maryland officials likely engaged in a long U.S. tradition of justifying silencing disfavored speech—in this instance anti-genocide voices—by citing the potential for public disorder based on threats made by pro-Israel individuals. A judge intervened against this censorship of the student's lawful activity following a lawsuit filed by Palestine Legal and CAIR. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

In August, Palestine Legal and CAIR announced a \$100,000 settlement agreement for their client, University of Maryland Students for Justice in Palestine (UMD SJP), paid by the University of Maryland (UMD).

The settlement agreement resolved the [September 2024 lawsuit](#) filed by the civil rights groups on behalf of UMD SJP against the University for its unconstitutional ban of the students' vigil for Gaza. It also stipulates that the University must publicly recognize UMD SJP as being in good standing as a student organization. CAIR and Palestine Legal [sued](#) UMD on September 17, 2024 for revoking approval for an interfaith vigil to mourn the lives lost in Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza hosted by UMD SJP and Jewish Voice for Peace on October 7th. UMD ultimately [banned](#) all student-organized events from taking place on campus that day.

UMD [responded to CAIR and Palestine Legal's lawsuit](#) by claiming that it was forced to cancel all events due to racist threats from pro-Israel individuals, who had threatened to organize a KKK rally and come to campus armed if SJP's vigil was allowed to proceed. At the hearing, UMD Police Chief David Mitchell testified that pro-Israel individuals even threatened UMD President Darryl Pines' family and used the N-word.

On October 1, 2024, the United States District Court for the District of Maryland ruled in favor of UMD SJP, finding that the university cannot bow to threats from pro-Israel individuals by shutting down the vigil.

In reference to the threats by pro-Israel individuals, the court decision noted "...this is a matter of law, not of wounded feelings." The Court also noted in its decision that should students choose to use the slogan "From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will be Free," it would also be an expressive idea protected by the First Amendment.

The SJP and JVP's October 7, 2024, vigil was attended by hundreds of students. The vigil, and a separate event hosted by Terps for Israel which also would have been prohibited by UMD's blanket student-organized events ban, [are reported to have passed without incident](#).

(NY) Federal Lawsuit Forces Police to Respect the Hijab and Religious Dignity in Custody

Snapshot: Religious freedom protections for a Muslim individual in a custodial setting effectively collapsed at the point of arrest and detention in Suffolk County, New York. A lawsuit filed by CAIR-NY and Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP resulted in policy reforms protecting religious head coverings for persons in police custody and a \$225,000 settlement.

In July, CAIR-NY and Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP announced a civil rights victory after a federal [lawsuit against Suffolk County resulted in a \\$225,000 settlement](#) and policy reforms protecting religious head coverings for persons in police custody.

In this instance, religious freedom protections for a Muslim individual in a custodial setting effectively collapsed at the point of arrest and detention. Officer discretion supplanted constitutional obligations, and protections only reasserted themselves through federal litigation.

The lawsuit, filed in January 2024 challenged the treatment of Marowa Fahmy, a practicing Muslim woman who was forced by Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD) officers to remove her hijab, strip-searched in front of a male officer, and

kept uncovered for hours despite repeatedly explaining that her sincerely held religious beliefs forbade her from being seen without her head covering by men outside her family. The lawsuit alleged violations of RLUIPA, the First Amendment, and the New York State Constitution.

Ms. Fahmy was arrested on October 9, 2022, following a domestic complaint later shown to be false. During her detention, officers compelled her to remove both layers of her hijab, denied her a replacement covering, and paraded her uncovered in front of male officers while she cried and begged to be allowed to cover herself. Officers strip-searched her in the presence of a male officer and later photographed her without her hijab, again over her objections. She remained uncovered for approximately nine hours.

Following the filing of the lawsuit, SCPD changed its official policy on religious head coverings. The revised policy explicitly allows arrestees to wear religious garments that do not substantially cover the face during booking photographs and while in custody, specifically naming hijabs, yarmulkes, and turbans. As part of the settlement, SCPD also committed to training officers on the updated policy. CAIR-NY Staff Attorney Burhan Carroll said the settlement reaffirmed that police departments must respect the hijab and the dignity of those who wear it, noting that the case produced concrete policy change beyond monetary damages.

Collective Punishment in Practice: Immigration, Travel Bans to Enforcement Surges

Snapshot: American law and values hold individuals, not groups, responsible for their actions. In 2025, the Trump administration collectively blamed and punished groups of people. A version of his first term Muslim Ban that had been scrubbed of overt religious bias in order to survive legal challenges was reinstated. Afghans, including many who helped U.S. missions in Afghanistan, were collectively treated as suspicious throughout the year. After one Afghan tragically attacked National Guardsmen in November, suspicion was cast on all Afghans, regardless of their immigration status or history. The DC tragedy also quickly became a springboard for Somalis being called “garbage” and collectively targeted. Syrians were informed that the instability in their nation that led to them being admitted to the U.S. now disqualifies them.

Punishment and enforcement must be individualized. Collective punishment—treating entire national, ethnic, or religious groups as suspect based on isolated incidents or generalized claims—contradicts core constitutional principles and values assigning responsibility to individuals, not collectives.

The Trump administration made use of collective guilt and punishment as part of an anti-immigrant agenda in 2025.

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Trump renewed his travel ban. While campaigning in 2015, then-candidate Trump promised a blunt instrument of collective sanction by enacting a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States.” On entering office in 2017, he issued Executive Order 13769, the Muslim Ban. In order to survive judicial scrutiny, the administration issued several iterations of the ban. In 2025, President Trump issued a new travel ban targeting 19 mostly Muslim and African nations and raised the specter of more vague ideological screening tests on immigrants.

While many ethnicities were targeted, we focus here on Syrians, Afghans, and Somalis. The singling out of Syrians, Afghans, and Somalis fits a long pattern in which Muslim communities are framed as uniquely suspect. Language describing countries as

“hotbeds of terrorism,” rhetoric labeling Somalis as “garbage,” and the framing of Muslim-majority nations as inherent security risks reveal how cultural prejudice informed state action.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a special immigration status granted to individuals from countries experiencing instability from war or natural disasters.

DHS terminated TPS for Syrians in September. DHS appeared to argue that the conditions of conflict and instability that supported the original TPS designation now weigh against its continuation.

DHS terminated TPS for Afghans in June. DHS Secretary Noem said the country, which the International Red Cross asserts is facing one of the world's most severe humanitarian challenges, no longer meets the conditions for the designation. As part of its argument, DHS asserted that some recipients were under investigation. DHS did not note that also among the recipients were people who risked their lives while supporting U.S. operations in Afghanistan. After an Afghan man tragically attacked two National Guardsmen in Washington, DC, killing one, the Trump administration paused all visa and immigration requests for Afghans.

After the DC attack, President Trump called Somalis “garbage.” He said he was revoking TPS for Somalis immediately. At the time of this report's completion, DHS appeared

to be executing that process. The Trump administration then launched Operation Metro Surge in Minnesota. Local groups reported documenting several illegal actions by federal officials during the enforcement surge. These reports include arresting and zip-tying a U.S. citizen for not having a passport on her and allegedly mocking her hijab, detaining a U.S. citizen and asking him why he was speaking a foreign language, and arresting a U.S. citizen, putting him in a chokehold, driving him to immigration court, and refusing to look at his identification.

Renewed Travel Ban

On June 4, 2025, President Trump signed Proclamation 10998, [“Restricting the Entry of Foreign Nationals to Protect the United States From Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats.”](#) A fact sheet accompanying the proclamation [cited President Trump’s campaign statement:](#) “We will restore the travel ban, some people call it the Trump travel ban, and keep the radical Islamic terrorists out of our country (sic) that was upheld by the Supreme Court.”

The renewed ban targeted 19 mostly Muslim and African nations and raised the specter of more vague ideological screening tests on immigrants. It applied only to individuals who were outside the U.S. on June 9, 2025, and who did not already have a valid visa.

CAIR called the order “unnecessary, overbroad and ideologically motivated.” [CAIR also acknowledged that the new ban contained several important exceptions](#), such as an exemption for anyone who already had legal status and immediate family members seeking to immigrate to America, making the 2025 ban less extreme than the two original Muslim Bans that President Trump enacted during his first term before successful lawsuits blocked their implementation.

Given the community demand for CAIR’s series of expert legal webinars about the ban, the organization provided a summary of its guidance to community members concerned about [travel and free speech issues under the Trump Administration](#).

The expanded ban fully suspended immigration and nonimmigrant visas for citizens of Afghanistan, Burma, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen who did not already have legal status in the United States and who did not fall into any of the other exceptions and exemptions mentioned in the proclamation. The ban imposed partial restrictions on Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela.

In December, the Trump administration [expanded its ban further](#) by adding seven more countries to the fully-banned list, imposing full restrictions on [people traveling with Palestinian Authority-issued documents](#), and limiting the

ability of U.S. citizens to reunite with their immediate family members from targeted countries.

The administration announced the expansion, naming Burkina Faso, Laos, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, and Syria to the list of fully banned countries and fully restricting entry for individuals using Palestinian Authority-issued/endorsed travel documents. It also imposed partial restrictions on the entry of nationals from Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Dominica, Gabon, The Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Tonga, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The administration also announced that it would no longer exempt the family members of U.S. citizens in targeted countries from the ban.

Back in February, Representative Judy Chu (D-CA) had reintroduced a bill originally introduced in 2019 which was aimed at preventing the Trump administration, and any future administration, from enacting religion-based travel bans targeting Muslims and any other religious groups. The [National Origin-Based Antidiscrimination for Nonimmigrants Act](#), also known as the NO BAN Act, would strengthen immigration legal protections to prohibit discrimination based on religion or national origin. The bill establishes necessary safeguards, including requiring justification based on credible evidence and consultation with Congress before imposing any restrictions on entry to the U.S. As this

report went to press in early 2026, the House committees to which the bill was referred have taken no action to further its consideration.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a [humanitarian program designed to protect individuals from being returned to countries that are considered unsafe due to circumstances such as armed conflict or natural disasters](#).

Many TPS holders face credible fears of persecution if forced to return to their home countries. However, asylum is notoriously difficult to obtain. Revoking TPS removes a critical layer of protection for those who may not be granted asylum.

Syrians

Following a 2011 uprising against a dictatorship, millions of Syrians became refugees or were internally displaced. TPS was initially granted by the Obama administration and renewed by the Trump and Biden administrations. President Trump has spoken positively about Syria's new president, Ahmed al-Sharaa.

Following the destruction left by the former Assad regime, which collapsed in late 2024, Syria continues to face record-level [humanitarian needs, with more than 16 million people](#) dependent on aid and millions more displaced or living in devastated communities, according to information last updated

by the European Commission in November 2025. Syrian refugees want to return to their homeland, but in addition to the above challenges, repeated Israeli military attacks and the presence of armed separatist militias continue to endanger civilian safety and undermine security.

In September, the DHS announced that it was terminating [TPS for Syrians](#), saying, in part, that "Syria has been a hotbed of terrorism and extremism for nearly two decades, and it is contrary to our national interest to allow Syrians to remain in our country." The statute authorizing TPS (8 U.S.C. § 1254a.) lists "ongoing armed conflict" among the reasons it can be granted.

In effect, DHS appears to argue that the exact conditions of conflict and instability that supported the original TPS designation now weigh against its continuation. Approximately 3,860 Syrian nationals were covered by TPS as of March 2025. The DHS announcement gave them 60 days to leave the U.S.

In October, the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), Muslim Advocates, and Van Der Hout LLP [filed suit challenging the administration's unlawful effort to terminate TPS for Syria](#). A [federal court](#) ordered the Department of Homeland Security to delay its planned termination in November.

Commenting on the ruling, Sadaf Hasan, a staff attorney at Muslim Advocates, said, "With little to no notice, this administration has played with human

lives in its attempts to unlawfully terminate TPS for Syrian nationals who have been living in fear of being forcibly deported to a dire humanitarian crisis in a matter of days. Today's ruling is a win against the government's broader racist and anti-immigrant agenda to eliminate access to TPS for countless other non-white immigrant communities who are part of this country's fabric. While the halt provides impacted TPS holders a brief exhale, our work continues to ensure their rights and the rule of law are upheld."

The administration said it will appeal.

Afghans

Afghans began immigrating to the United States shortly after that nation was invaded by the Soviet Union in 1979. The U.S. provided assistance to an Afghan Mujahedin resistance that significantly contributed to the collapse of America's Cold War nemesis. Most recently, tens of thousands of Afghans fled their nation during and after the U.S. military withdrawal in the summer of 2021. According to the Congressional [Research Service](#), "These Afghan nationals included persons who had assisted the United States during its two-decade military presence and economic development efforts in Afghanistan."

In April, DHS [announced that protections for Afghans](#) living legally in the U.S. under TPS would end in May. Subsequently, Secretary Noem [announced that TPS for Afghanistan will expire on May 20, 2025, with](#)

[termination effective July 14, 2025](#), saying that the country no longer met the conditions for TPS.

In December, the International Committee of the Red Cross concluded that "[Afghanistan continues to face one of the world's most severe humanitarian challenges](#)" and that "nearly half the population required humanitarian assistance" in 2025.

In the release DHS also noted, "There are recipients who have been under investigation for fraud and threatening our public safety and national security." Also among the recipients are people who fled Taliban persecution and others who risked their lives supporting U.S. military and humanitarian missions.

In April 2025, Afghan refugees, many of whom were reportedly involved in assisting the United States' efforts in Afghanistan, began receiving letters saying that their parole had been rescinded.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [defines parole](#) as "The discretionary decision that allows inadmissible aliens to leave an inspection facility freely so that, although they are not admitted to the United States, they are permitted to be physically present in the United States."

In part, the letter said, "[It is time for you to leave the United States](#). Don't attempt to remain in the United States. The federal government will find you. Please depart the United States immediately."

Following the horrific late November shooting of two National Guardsmen, allegedly committed by an Afghan national legally residing in the U.S., federal agencies announced a series of broad immigration restrictions, including [pausing all visa issuance](#) and [immigration requests](#) for Afghan nationals indefinitely “pending further review of security and vetting protocols” and halting all asylum application decisions.

USCIS [also announced](#) that it will reexamine lawful permanent resident status, also known as green cards, for nationals from 19 countries under the administration’s expanded travel ban—a majority of which are Muslim-majority, African, or Caribbean countries.

The agency additionally [issued new guidance](#) about the use of “negative, country-specific factors” to be considered when vetting new immigration applications for nationals of these countries.

In December, CAIR-SFBA warned of increasing detentions of Afghan community members in the Bay Area being carried out by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE). CAIR’s attorneys and partner organizations across Northern California reported that at minimum, one dozen individuals were detained during the first week of December. The Bay Area is home to an estimated 60,000 Afghan residents—one of the largest Afghan communities in the United States. Many are refugees, Special Immigrant Visa holders, green card holders, and family members of those who

assisted U.S. missions during two decades of U.S. intervention in Afghanistan.

CAIR-SFBA reported seeing an increase in calls from Afghan families whose loved ones suddenly faced ICE contact, unscheduled check-ins, and new threats to their immigration status, adding to fear and uncertainty in a community already living with the trauma of war, displacement, and family separation.



ZAHRA BILLOO
Executive Director, CAIR-San Francisco Bay Area
Speaking to Fox News

“We’re hearing from a lot of people who are afraid. In each of these instances, the individuals were instructed to report to ICE. It was a scheduled meeting, but it was unusual because it was short notice. Shortly after arriving and checking in, they were detained.”

Zahra Billoo, Executive Director of CAIR-San Francisco Bay Area, speaking to Fox News about increased ICE detentions affecting Afghan community members in Northern California.

Somalis

Somali migration to the U.S. primarily began in the early 1990s as a result of the Somali civil war, which displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

An estimated 107,000 people of Somali descent live in Minnesota. Federal data says 58 percent of them are American born. Of those Somalis who were born outside of the U.S., 87 percent are [naturalized citizens](#).

President Trump has repeatedly singled out Somali Minnesotans. In 2016, he described Somali refugee resettlement as a "disaster" for Minnesota and claimed—without evidence—that [Somali refugees were bringing crime and cultural incompatibility](#). While campaigning in 2024, when asked why Somali Americans should support his candidacy, [he responded](#), "Because they want safety, they want security ... they want security just like everybody else."

In November, President Trump posted to Truth Social that he was terminating TPS for Somalis in the U.S. "effective immediately." He does not have the authority to do this. When asked about this point, DHS Secretary Noem said the agency would [follow process](#).

Congressional Research Service reported, "As of March 31, 2025, 705 nationals of Somalia were covered by TPS according to USCIS." ([Congressional Research Service](#).)

DHS launched Operation Metro Surge in Minneapolis in early December. Reporting not confirmed by the government suggests that around 100 Federal agents would initially be involved in the [immigration enforcement surge](#).

On December 18, Free Speech for People and CAIR-MN sent a letter to multiple Minnesota officials asking them to open criminal investigations into the unlawful actions of federal agents operating in the Twin Cities and throughout the state, including racially profiling and kidnapping U.S. citizens. The [below extended quote from the letter](#) offers key background and a list of alleged incidents⁹ that prompted the call:

"Federal agents have descended on the Twin Cities, racially profiling people of Latino and Somali descent and requiring they provide proof of citizenship or risk arrest. Although the precise number of people detained is not known—because federal agents and officials are being opaque about their operations—in only a week several illegal actions have already been documented, both in the Twin Cities and throughout Minnesota. They include:

- Illegally entering Augsburg University without a warrant and pointing guns at bystanders while making an arrest.

- Arresting a U.S. citizen for not having a passport on her, tying her up with zip ties, mocking her hijab, touching her inappropriately, and detaining her for twenty-four hours until her husband was able to locate her and provide her passport.
- Detaining a U.S. citizen, asking him why he was speaking a foreign language and demanding to see his identification while accompanied by a right-wing influencer.
- Arresting a U.S. citizen, putting him in a chokehold, driving him to immigration court, and refusing to look at his identification.
- In Olmsted County, arresting a man with legal status off the street.
- In Dakota County, entering a home without a warrant and guns drawn, briefly detaining a family of U.S. citizens, and abducting two undocumented parents of a seven-year-old child.
- In Dakota County, pushing a U.S. citizen who refused to allow them entry into her building onto the ground and threatening to arrest her.

The incidents above represent a sample of publicly reported operations. Particularly given that the targets of these operations are vulnerable members of Minnesota communities who may not be able to seek or feel comfortable seeking assistance from law

enforcement or government officials, the incidents listed above likely represent only a sliver of the criminal acts being committed against Minnesota residents by federal agents.”

Somali Daycare Investigations

After a video by YouTuber Nick Shirley went viral in December, CBS News conducted an independent investigation of his allegations. Shirley alleged that he found a scheme involving Somali-run daycare centers in Minnesota.

Fraud happens in America. The Department of Justice [lists a number of people convicted of fraud who received pardons or commutations in 2025](#). Among others, President Trump commuted the sentence of a man convicted of defrauding investors of [\\$1.6 billion and former Rep. George Santos \(R-NY\), who pled guilty to wire fraud charges](#). There are cases with federal charges, pleas, and convictions in Minnesota.

This report is concerned with how laws, policies, and government actions operated in practice in 2025 and what that implies equal access to social opportunities and equal protection under the law.

“CBS News conducted its own analysis of nearly a dozen day care centers mentioned by Shirley: all but two have active licenses, according to state records, and all active locations were

visited by state regulators within the last six months. One, Sweet Angel Child Care, Inc., was subject to an unannounced inspection as recently as Dec. 4. CBS News' review also found dozens of citations related to safety, cleanliness, equipment and staff training, among other violations, but there was no recorded evidence of fraud." Another facility that Shirley claimed is always empty, "WCCO found more than a dozen children at the day care working with several adult staff members." NBC news reported, "Minnesota's Department of Children, Youth, and Families on Friday said that investigators have found child care facilities at the center of [recent fraud allegations were operating as they should.](#)"

According to media reports, the Nokomis Daycare Center [was vandalized](#) following a wave of online misinformation and hostile rhetoric directed at Minnesota's Somali community after Shirley posted his video. That facility was not included in Shirley's viral social media video.

Immigration Law as Ideological Punishment

Snapshot: Framing speech supporting Palestinian human rights as inherently threatening and biased, the Trump administration justified a number of visa revocations and high-profile arrests based on the targeted individual's viewpoints, delivering on his promise of "ideological screening." At least three students and a journalist were

the subjects of widely publicized arrests and allegations of wrongdoing. In each instance, court evidence did not support the allegations. By September, a federal judge ruled in a case brought by the American Association of University Professors and the Middle East Studies Association that government officials "deliberately and with purposeful aforethought" coordinated two federal agencies to "intentionally to chill the rights to freedom of speech and peacefully to assemble" of the group's members.

The Trump administration established a pattern wherein support for Palestinian life, liberty, and dignity was framed as a national security threat and even indicative of support for terrorism. Nineteen attorneys general filed a brief in April, noting that federal immigration law was being used to punish pro-Palestinian beliefs.

While campaigning in 2024, Trump said he would “[implement strong ideological screening for all immigrants](#).” In practice, the Trump Administration’s ideological screening often saw immigration laws used not to address unlawful conduct, but to penalize protected political expression.

The Trump administration established a pattern wherein support for Palestinian life, liberty, and dignity was framed as a national security threat and even indicative of support for terrorism. Nineteen attorneys general filed a brief in April, noting that federal immigration law was being used to punish pro-Palestinian beliefs. In high profile incidents, students Mahmoud Khalil, Rumeysa Ozturk, and Badar Khan Suri, as well as journalist Sami Hamdi, were targeted for their opposition to Israeli genocide, occupation, and apartheid policies.

Ruling on a case brought by the American Association of University Professors and the Middle East Studies Association, a judge found “clear and convincing evidence” that DHS and the State Department coordinated to “intentionally to chill the rights to freedom of speech and peacefully to assemble of the non-citizen plaintiff members of the plaintiff associations.” An August USCIS policy alert instructed officers to treat as an “overwhelmingly negative” factor any applicant alleged to have “endorsed, promoted, supported, or otherwise espoused” the views of “anti-American ideologies” or groups, including those labeled as tied to “antisemitic terrorism.”

Initial public claims of criminal or otherwise illegal behavior were largely unsupported by any evidence. Secretary of State Marco Rubio signed a two-page document that alleged no criminal conduct by Mahmoud Khalil but said he could be deported for his beliefs. The administration accused Ozturk of supporting terror but did not produce evidence supporting the allegation in court. Observers suggest that Ozturk was targeted for a 2024 opinion piece in a Tufts University student newspaper which challenged the university’s policies toward Israel. Suri was similarly publicly accused, with no evidence produced, and circuit court judges found evidence that he was targeted for First Amendment protected speech. Hamdi faced similar accusations, but the immigration charging document alleged only a visa overstay. The government had revoked his visa without cause and did not notify him.

Procedural irregularities detailed below—secret visa revocations, lack of notice, transfers far from counsel, and reliance on discretionary Cold War-era provisions—weakened due-process protections for those who spoke out against the ongoing genocide in Palestine.

Student Visa Revocations

“The Trump Administration, through two executive orders, laid the groundwork for deporting noncitizens [with whom it politically disagrees](#),” a coalition of 19 attorneys general wrote in an early April court brief.

They added, "Each of these students was targeted for enforcement as part of a systematic effort by the Trump Administration—via the explicit directive of Executive Order 14188—to use federal immigration laws to punish noncitizen students (and others) associated with pro-Palestinian beliefs."

The two executive orders were Executive Order 14161, "Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats" and Executive Order 14188, "Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism."

By late March, Secretary of State Rubio said more than 300 student visas had been revoked and called the students "[lunatics](#)."

In April, Ami Hutchinson asserted that her law firm was [representing 50 Arizona State University students whose visas](#) had been revoked. Hutchinson told the Arizona Luminaria that "all of the students they've worked with are from India, China, or Muslim-majority countries." In light of a U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights letter, issued in March, warning 60 universities of "potential enforcement actions if institutions do not fulfill their obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to protect Jewish students on campus," attorneys wondered if the revocations were related to anti-genocide protests.

Among those impacted according to CAIR-CA were several dozen students

from California universities, including Stanford and the University of California campuses in Berkeley, Davis, Los Angeles, and San Diego, whose visas were abruptly terminated without warning. [Reporting suggests](#) that at UC Berkeley, students were targeted due to their "political activism involving pro-Palestinian demonstrations." Stanford reported that four current students and two recent graduates had their visas revoked.

USCIS Israel-First Policy Alert and Social Media Screening

In April, USCIS announced a policy to screen social media for "antisemitic activity" to block [immigration benefits](#). The policy affected people applying for lawful permanent status, foreign student visas and others affiliated with educational institutions. While the announcement did not define "antisemitic activity," it came at a time when the Trump administration was targeting international students nationwide for taking part in peaceful protests against Israel's [genocide in Gaza](#).

On August 19, USCIS released [Policy Alert PA-2025-16](#), instructing officers to treat as an "overwhelmingly negative" factor any applicant alleged to have "endorsed, promoted, supported, or otherwise espoused" the views of so-called "anti-American ideologies" or groups, including those labeled as tied to "antisemitic terrorism." The guidance applied immediately to a wide range of benefits, including adjustment of status, extensions and changes of status, employment authorization, student reinstatement,

national interest waivers, and EB-5 petitions.

CAIR warned that the vague, politically charged, and Israel-First standards would be weaponized to punish Palestinians, Muslims, Arabs, and their allies for engaging in protected advocacy. Targeted advocacy included criticism of Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza, its forced starvation of civilians, the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian communities, illegal land theft and occupation, settler violence, and apartheid policies. The policy also threatened the denial of benefits to those who support Boycott,

Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns as a lawful, nonviolent means of advancing Palestinian rights.

Mahmoud Khalil

On March 8, Columbia University anti-genocide activist Mahmoud Khalil found himself facing ICE officials. One of them told him his student visa was canceled. [Informed that Khalil has a green card, not a student visa, the officials said that it was also canceled.](#) When Khalil's attorney later called and asked to see the warrant authorizing Khalil's detention, the agent hung up on her.



CAIR attorneys represented Mahmoud Khalil and other plaintiffs after a Congressional committee demanded that Columbia University turn over personal information that likely involved hundreds of students. Columbia has not furnished any records to the federal government since a Court order was issued in response to the lawsuit. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

At the time of his arrest, he had neither been charged with nor convicted of a crime. He was quickly transferred from New York to a detention facility in Louisiana, [some 1,200 miles](#) away from his attorneys.

Pressed for evidence to support Khalil's detention, Secretary of State Marco Rubio signed a two-page memo that the Associated Press said [does "not allege any criminal conduct by Khalil" but simply that "Khalil could be expelled for his beliefs."](#) Rubio cited the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) in his memo as the basis for his authority to detail and deport Khalil. During court proceedings, Judge Jamee Comans of the LaSalle Immigration Court in Louisiana noted that the INA gives the secretary of state "unilateral judgment" to deport a non-citizen.

In May, a federal judge argued that Khalil was "likely to win on the merits" of his arguments against the federal government's assertion that he poses a threat to the administration's foreign policy goal of combating antisemitism. Judge Michael Farbiarz of the Federal District Court in New Jersey wrote that the administration's use of the INA appears to be "[unconstitutionally vague as applied](#)" to Khalil.

In June, a federal judge ruled that Khalil detention. Khalil left the detention facility on June 20, after over 100 days in ICE custody and a protracted legal battle that implicates the rights of anti-genocide activists across the country.

Rumeysa Ozturk

On March 25, Tufts graduate student Rumeysa Ozturk was abducted by federal immigration authorities. Video provided by neighbors appeared to show Ozturk being [seized by masked federal agents after leaving her home, handcuffed, and driven away in an unmarked van to an unknown location.](#)

The Washington Post later reported that the State Department had failed to find evidence tying her to antisemitism or terrorism [before she was snatched from the street by masked ICE agents.](#)

Ozturk, a Turkish national, is a PhD student and doctoral research assistant at Tufts' Children's Television Project. She completed a [master's degree at Columbia University as a Fulbright Scholar.](#) She was one of several authors of a 2024 opinion essay published in the Tufts student newspaper [criticizing university leaders for their response to the Gaza genocide and urging divestment from companies with ties to Israel.](#)

The Trump administration accused her of supporting a foreign terrorist organization but presented no evidence supporting the claim in court. She was moved around to multiple facilities before being held in a detention center in Louisiana. Even after a judge ordered her release, [ICE reportedly attempted to delay it.](#)

While detained, Ozturk reportedly suffered several asthma attacks

in conditions she describes as “unsanitary, unsafe, and inhumane.” Ozturk was also apparently denied her constitutionally-protected [religious rights in detention, reporting that her Islamic headscarf, or hijab, was forcibly removed](#). A nurse reportedly said, “You need to take that thing [hijab] off your head” and removed it without her permission.

Badar Khan Suri

Badar Khan Suri was [arrested and detained by ICE on March 17](#), apparently due to his wife’s connections to Gaza and criticism of the Israeli government’s genocide. Following a pattern seen in other detentions, Suri was moved several

times throughout his detention and ended up [in Texas](#).

In May, a federal judge found that Suri [raised substantial First Amendment claims](#). The [judge said government attorneys had not offered evidence to refute Suri’s claims](#) that he was being unconstitutionally punished for his criticism of U.S. support for Israel’s Gaza genocide.

By July, the Fourth Circuit found that “the evidence that [Suri had been targeted over his First Amendment-protected speech – and that the administration had intended to deport him quickly](#), with minimal due process – warranted the judge’s intervention.”



Judges found evidence that Badar Khan Suri (left) was arrested by ICE over his First Amendment-protected speech. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

Sami Hamdi

Immigration officers detained British Muslim journalist and political commentator Sami Hamdi at San Francisco International Airport on the morning of Oct. 26th. After more than two weeks in ICE custody based on nothing more than a government-manufactured visa-overstay allegation, Hamdi left the United States voluntarily.

Hamdi had traveled to California on a valid visa for a series of public appearances in which he spoke about Palestinian human rights and the Israeli genocide in Gaza. After anti-Muslim, pro-Israel extremists began urging U.S. officials to revoke his visa and remove him from the country, the government secretly revoked his visa and then detained him. At the time, the government refused to allow him to simply return to his native United Kingdom.

His attorneys argued in court that his detention was political retaliation and that it violated his First Amendment rights, illegally suppressing his future speech. The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) [quickly called for his immediate release](#). The Notice to Appear initiating Hamdi's removal case charged only a visa overstay—an overstay created by the government's own secret revocation of Hamdi's legitimately issued visa.

CAIR-CA, immigration attorney Hassan Ahmad, and MLFA promptly

challenged his detention in federal court via a habeas petition, arguing that holding a journalist based on a manufactured overstay—after a sudden, unexplained revocation—raised grave First Amendment and due process concerns. The government's response raised jurisdictional arguments and never rebutted the merits of Hamdi's constitutional claims.

A federal judge held that the court had jurisdiction and agreed with Hamdi, issuing a temporary restraining order (TRO) blocking ICE from transferring



Sami Hamdi following his release from ICE detention. (Credit: CAIR-San Francisco Bay Area (@cair_sfba), Instagram.)

Hamdi out of California while his habeas petition and constitutional claims were litigated and preserving his access to counsel and to the court. The court also found that Hamdi had “demonstrated that some form of injunctive relief regarding his custody status may be appropriate.”

Even as the government’s own filings depicted Hamdi’s case as an overstayed visa, DHS used its official social media platforms to malign him, a troubling misuse of power that raises broader civil liberties concerns.

According to Hamdi and his legal team, conditions at the facility were harsh not only for him but for hundreds of other detainees, many held long before he arrived. He was crowded with dozens of men in a single room, fed meager detention-center rations, and forced to wait more than eight hours for medical attention while in excruciating pain, initially relying on medication from another detainee. He was also transported multiple times, without notice, in full shackles and was kept shackled overnight at a site whose capacity to house people overnight was unclear. His attorneys emphasized that such treatment was inflicted on someone never charged with a crime and that hundreds of other civil detainees endure the same conditions in for-profit facilities with little oversight, where detention and delay are incentivized.

Hamdi chose to accept an offer to leave the U.S. voluntarily. The immigration charging document

filed in his case alleged only a visa overstay—after the government revoked his visa without cause and without prior notice—and never identified any criminal conduct or security grounds. This agreement establishes that the government does not consider Hamdi a danger to the community or to national security.

Federal Judge says Intentional Effort to Chill Speech and Peaceful Assembly

In September, a federal judge ruled that government officials [unconstitutionally violated the free speech rights of pro-Palestinian students](#) as they sought to deport international students and scholars, including [Mahmoud Khalil](#) and Tufts University’s [Rumeysa Ozturk](#), for expressing pro-Palestinian, anti-genocide views.

U.S. District Court Judge William Young [wrote in his ruling](#) in a case filed by the American Association of University Professors and the Middle East Studies Association: “This Court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem and the Secretary of State Marco Rubio, together with the subordinate officials and, agents of each of them, deliberately and with purposeful aforethought, did so concert their actions and those of their two departments intentionally to chill the rights to freedom of speech and peacefully to assemble of the non-citizen plaintiff members of the plaintiff associations.”

Universities, Free Speech, and the Weaponization of Antisemitism Claims

Snapshot: Statements issued by hundreds of Rabbis and Cantors, leaders of several Jewish community serving organizations, three-fourths of the respondents to a September poll of Jewish community members, and the lead author of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism – one which pro-Israel groups have championed – all assert that the Trump administration is using antisemitism as an excuse to assault free speech and universities. Framing speech supporting Palestinian human rights as inherently threatening and biased, the Trump administration used civil rights investigations to discipline institutions of higher education and suppress political speech. The well-documented wave of Islamophobia that arose post-October 2023 saw scant enforcement actions and unequal treatment under the law. Invasive government efforts sought the private records of Muslim, Jewish, and other faculty and staff. A CAIR lawsuit at Columbia University inhibited one such privacy breach. American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and Middle East Studies Association (MESA) found that both the Biden and Trump administration's flipped Title VI civil rights protections to suppress speech opposing Israel's Gaza genocide.

In academic spaces, civil rights protections, intended to shield vulnerable communities, appear to have been repurposed to discipline institutions and suppress political speech, often to the detriment of Muslim and pro-Palestinian voices. Public dissent, especially from Jewish leaders, emerged as a counterweight but did not fully stem the trend.

In academic spaces, civil rights protections, intended to shield vulnerable communities, appear to have been repurposed to discipline institutions and suppress political speech, often to the detriment of Muslim and pro-Palestinian voices. Public dissent, especially from Jewish leaders, emerged as a counterweight but did not fully stem the trend.

In January, President Trump [issued the Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism executive order](#) and an accompanying fact sheet. The Trump administration and many Congressional elements paint all voices calling for an end to Israel's genocide, apartheid, and occupation as dangerous and biased. Leo Terrell, appointed to head the Department of Justice (DOJ) antisemitism task force, has shared anti-Muslim content on social media, raising questions about his representation of the DOJ. As the Department of Education (DOE) launched its own campaign to break universities, a third of the universities the agency targeted with threat letters had already resolved antisemitism complaints or had never been the

subject of complaints. Several of the DOE targeted universities had received a positive rating from the pro-Israel Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

American Jews, including religious and political leadership, think the Trump administration is using antisemitism as an excuse to assault free speech and universities. This includes statements issued by hundreds of Rabbis and Cantors, leaders of several Jewish community serving organizations, three-fourths of the respondents to a September poll, and the lead author of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism - a definition of antisemitism pro-Israel groups have championed.



Framing speech supporting Palestinian human rights as inherently threatening and biased, the Trump administration used civil rights investigations to discipline institutions of higher education and suppress political speech. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

Settlement agreements between universities and the DOE frequently expand beyond alleged antisemitism issues into other Trump administration priorities. None of the public terms of the University of Virginia's settlement involved antisemitism. Chicago's Northwestern University agreed to roll back promises it had made to establish a space for Middle Eastern and North African and Muslim students. Seven now-former Department of Justice attorneys felt they were under pressure to reach pre-determined conclusions in California investigations.

Both the administration and Congress demanded personal records and information from universities under investigation. This included demanding the disciplinary records of hundreds of students from Columbia University. CAIR was part of a lawsuit that blocked that federal demand, which also included insistence that Columbia impose "an Israel-specific speech code that would punish students for criticizing Israel." The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) subpoenaed names, email addresses, phone numbers, of UC Berkeley faculty who signed open letters expressing concern for civilian life in Gaza and condemned both antisemitism and Islamophobia on campus. The Trump administration also asked a court to compel the University of Pennsylvania to turn over contact information for some Jewish faculty and staff as part of an antisemitism investigation there. Two campus Jewish groups expressed alarm.

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and Middle East Studies Association (MESA) found that in the last two years, under both Biden and Trump, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act has become the most important legal tool of repression against campus speech. While noting that this also happened under the Biden administration, they observed that "The Trump administration has gone even further, weaponizing antisemitism as a pretext to advance broader far right agendas in higher education."

Framing Anti-genocide Voices as Dangerous While Conflating Criticism of Israel with Antisemitism

In December 2024, the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary released its "[Staff Report on Antisemitism](#)." The report contains at least nine references to faculty, students, or protests it labels "anti-Israel." The report repeatedly pairs "antisemitism" with broad depictions of "anti-Israel" activity and campus protest, conflating the two. Once in office, President Trump [threatened to unconstitutionally punish](#) anti-genocide student protesters and academic institutions that allowed anti-genocide protests to take place on campus.

[In a fact sheet accompanying his Anti-Semitism executive order, Trump labeled anti-genocide voices as "pro-jihadist protests."](#) President Trump also asserted that the DOJ will immediately act against "pro-Hamas vandalism and intimidation, and investigate

and punish anti-Jewish racism in leftist, anti-American colleges and universities."

CAIR called the executive order "[dishonest, overbroad and unenforceable.](#)"

In March, the newly formed DOJ Federal Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism said it would visit 10 university campuses. The visits would determine if campuses were complying with federal civil rights laws.

Senior Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Leo Terrell was selected to lead the task force. Terrell has shared Islamophobic content allegedly depicting Muslims in ethnic dress in Texas, saying "This should not be happening in Texas" and "[take note of the attire.](#)" In another video showing Muslims praying in New York, Terrell said, "[Jews in NYC: You voted in favor of this!](#)" and called on Jews to report antisemitism due to [New York acknowledging Muslim Heritage Month](#). He also described Laura Loomer, an Islamophobe whom the New York Post's editorial board referred to as a self-described "pro-white Nationalist," as "[great and fabulous](#)" in a photo where they were pictured together.

Also in March, Linda McMahon's DOE sent letters to 60 universities warning of "[potential enforcement actions.](#)" [Reuters found a third of the universities](#) "had already resolved earlier complaints or had never been subject to such complaints at all."

Seven of the universities had received reasonably positive ratings from the pro-Israel ADL. By December, Education Week reported that DOE had opened "at least 131 investigations aligned with core Trump policy objectives since the president took office." Most were not "in response to complaints it has received." Alleged antisemitic harassment was the [third most common reason for investigations.](#)

Finally, in March 2025, EEOC Acting Chair Andrea Lucas also promised to "hold accountable" places of higher education that [had allegedly ignored issues of antisemitism.](#)

A Wide Swath of American Jews Think Trump Is Using Antisemitism as an Excuse to Assault Free Speech and Universities

American Jewish religious and political leadership have expressed concerns about the motivations and intended outcomes of the Trump administration's antisemitism campaign.

In September, while commenting on the results of a survey of American Jews he helped design, James Druckman reported, "Three-fourths of the sample view the Trump administration as using antisemitism as an excuse." Also commenting on the survey, Becca Israel, director of the Nexus Project, a nonprofit that combats antisemitism and promotes democracy, said, "The weaponization of these legitimate concerns for

unrelated political goals – as evidenced by Trump cutting the very [Office for Civil Rights that investigates antisemitism while claiming to fight it – really represents a dangerous distraction.](#)"

[Over 550 Rabbis and Cantors](#) agreed that the administration was "overtly abusing" the issue to divide Americans and harm vulnerable minorities. Separately, 10 organizations, representing three of the four denominations, decried using "the guise of fighting antisemitism" to strip students of due process and [threaten education funding](#). The CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs decried "exploiting" real Jewish concerns to "undermine [the] rule of law" and [other democratic norms](#). The American Jewish Committee also raised concerns over administration actions threatening university funding made ["under the auspices of combating antisemitism."](#)

Kenneth Stern, the lead author of the controversial IHRA definition of antisemitism discussed elsewhere in this report, characterized the Trump administration's use of the definition [as an assault on free speech and higher education](#): "I think it's a total assault on the university, which has been a very important institution for Jews over the last number of decades."

After the Trump administration's initial threat to freeze Brown University's federal funds in April, dozens of alumni who were also rabbis and cantors wrote to university President Christina

Paxson, saying, "[Do not cede control to those who weaponize antisemitism.](#)"

Federal Antisemitism Investigation Settlements Expand Well-Beyond Antisemitism

In July, New York-based Columbia University agreed to pay a \$200 million settlement and ["also pay \\$21 million to settle investigations"](#) brought by the EEOC – delivering payments directly to employees who said they had been discriminated against." The [deal restored \\$200 million in federal funds that had been frozen](#) by the Trump administration in March.

According [to a White House fact sheet](#), its agreement with Columbia University was initiated by allegations of "public incidents and subsequent civil rights investigations and actions regarding Columbia's alleged discrimination on the basis of race and national origin" and includes "the largest ever settlement for victims of anti-Semitism and for workers of any religion." It also includes elements which, among other things, address diversity programs, transgender issues, Middle East studies, and enlist the university in the administration's immigration crackdown, including "assessing applicants' reasons for wishing to study in the U.S. [and] sharing relevant data with the Federal Government."

There is no mention of resolving issues of alleged discrimination on the basis of race and national origin involving [Muslim, Palestinian, or other pro-](#)

[Palestine voices](#). For example, a Title VI investigation opened by DOE's Office for Civil Rights on May 23, 2024 after Palestine Legal documented possible discriminatory treatment of Palestinian students remains open on [DoE's website as of January 7, 2025](#).

In July, Brown University in Rhode Island agreed to pay \$50 million to restore \$500 million in federal funding that was frozen by the Trump administration. According to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), "the initial freeze of [\\$500 million in the school's federal funding in April](#) was ostensibly part of an effort to combat campus antisemitism," but the settlement also included concessions on culture war issues.

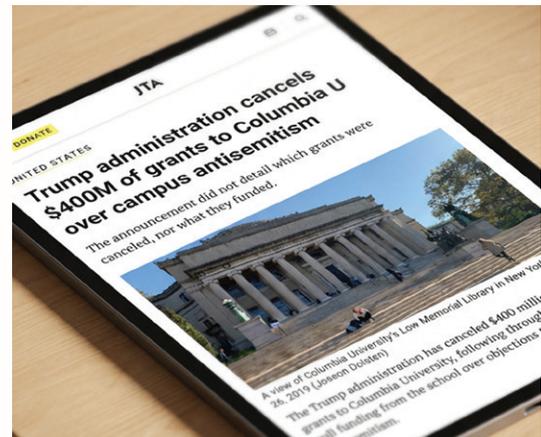
In October, the University of Virginia agreed to a deal that the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) described as "an antisemitism-related deal." JTA reported that the settlement involved culture war items such as UVA agreeing to end certain DEI initiatives, but "[None of the public terms of its settlement involved addressing antisemitism](#)."

In November, Cornell University in New York agreed to "[pay \\$60 million to the Trump administration to resolve ongoing antisemitism investigations and unfreeze \\$250 million in federal funds](#)."

Also in November, Chicago's Northwestern University struck a deal with the Trump administration to unfreeze \$790 million in Federal

funding that had been frozen due to an antisemitism investigation. The University [agreed to pay \\$75 million](#), renege on its agreement to create a dedicated space for Muslim and North African students, and enact other "other conservative culture-war" measures, including policies on race-based hiring and transgender athletes. The University also abandoned its promise to students and reneged on [the Deering Meadow Agreement](#) that, in part, would have "established a temporary space for Middle Eastern and North African and Muslim students with promises of a future permanent house (...) to support visiting Palestinian students and faculty."

In December, the Los Angeles Times reported, "Nine former Department of Justice attorneys assigned to investigate alleged antisemitism at the University of California described chaotic and rushed directives from the Trump administration and [told The Times they felt pressured to conclude that campuses](#) had violated the civil rights of Jewish students and staff."



Screenshot of JTA article on federal grant cancellations to Columbia University.

Demanding Personal Information and Records

The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforces sent a letter to Columbia University on March 13, 2025, demanding that the University produce all student or student-worker disciplinary records to the Committee relating to eleven specific incidents, which likely involves the records of hundreds of students.

With Mahmoud Khalil and other plaintiffs, CAIR-NY, CAIR National, and the law firm of Dratel & Lewis filed for a temporary restraining order and sued.

In their lawsuit, the attorneys wrote, "In that March 13th letter, federal officials commanded Columbia University to suppress a specific viewpoint with which it disagrees. Dole out suspensions and expulsions

against those who gathered and spoke out last year, the government bellowed. And within hours, campus officials complied." They added, "Given the hundreds of millions of dollars the federal government intends to withhold as ransom, campus officials will surely comply with every one of the federal government's demands. That includes, among other things, the federal government's order that Columbia University adopt an Israel-specific speech code that would punish students for criticizing Israel in the common and typical ways people criticize foreign countries."

The lawsuit alleged that federal agencies, at the direction of the President, have participated in efforts to violate the students' First Amendments rights. A judge agreed, [issuing an order compelling Columbia University to comply until a hearing could occur.](#)



Onlookers hold a banner as CAIR-CA, local civil rights attorneys and leading personal injury firms, announce the filing of a lawsuit against UCLA and several law enforcement agencies over violence against pro-Palestinian activists. (Credit: CAIR-LA)

Columbia has not furnished any records to the federal government since the Court's order in this case. Columbia is, in fact, banned from providing any student records to the federal government without first notifying the court.

In April, the EEOC subpoenaed personal information belonging to hundreds of University of California Berkeley (UC Berkeley) faculty members who signed petitions related to the Israel-Gaza war. The subpoena demanded names, email addresses, phone numbers, and dates of hire for professors who signed open letters in 2023 and 2024—letters that [expressed concern for civilian life in Gaza and condemned both antisemitism and Islamophobia on campus](#).

In September, UC Berkeley provided the unredacted names of approximately 160 students, staff, and faculty to DOE's Office for Civil Rights [in a federal antisemitism investigation](#). CAIR-SFBA filed a public records request, asking UC Berkeley to disclose records showing who ordered the release of personal information, what exactly was shared with federal officials, what legal guidance campus leaders relied on, and whether those whose names were turned over were ever notified or given a chance to respond. CAIR-SFBA says the records are necessary to determine whether the university complied with its obligations under federal and state privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and whether it took its duty

seriously to protect students, [faculty, and staff from political targeting and retaliation](#).

In November, the Trump administration asked a court to compel the University of Pennsylvania to turn over contact information for some Jewish faculty and staff. The request was based on a claim from the EEOC that its request for documents related to complaints of antisemitism, "including the full names and position titles of employees who made complaints of antisemitism or discrimination based on their Jewish religion, faith or identity," on campus was not met. U Penn administrators countered, saying that they had provided the documentation but had only provided personal information to the government when permission was granted by the individuals involved.

In a joint statement, Penn Hillel and MEOR Penn, two campus Jewish groups, wrote, "Across history, the compelled cataloguing of Jews has been a source of profound danger, and collection of Jews' private information carries echoes of the very patterns that made Jewish communities vulnerable for centuries." U Penn was not among the institutions that received the DOE's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) letters in March which warned of enforcement action due to alleged failure to protect Jewish students on campus.

Title VI Turned on Its Head: Antisemitism Allegations as a Tool to Repress Palestine Advocacy

In a November report, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and Middle East Studies Association (MESA) found that over two years, the government has taken "[unprecedented steps to suppress campus speech](#)." Those steps centered on suppressing speech opposing Israel's Gaza genocide.

In a [statement accompanying the report](#), AAUP General Counsel Veena Dubal said, "The findings in this report underscore how the Civil Rights Act of 1964—which passed in response to years of nonviolent civil disobedience against racial injustice—is being cynically misused to squash political dissent and speech that advocates for the human rights of Palestinians. This is a perverse outcome."

Most university investigations were prompted by off campus actors, sometimes with "no relationship with the schools under investigation." AAUP and MESA researchers found that "Between October 7, 2023, and the end of 2024, the Biden administration opened more antisemitism probes against colleges and universities (65) than for all other types of racial harassment combined (38). The Trump administration appears to have halted racial harassment investigations altogether, while continuing to open new antisemitism probes."

"Counterintuitively," AAUP and MESA researchers wrote in their November report, "the most important legal tool of repression against campus speech has been civil rights law - specifically, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits institutions that receive federal financial assistance from engaging in discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin."

Explaining this, they write, "Under pressure from pro-Israel groups, the Biden administration took steps to advance the conflation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism and thereby rubber-stamped universities' crackdown on critics. The Trump administration has gone even further, weaponizing antisemitism as a pretext to advance broader far right agendas in higher education."

In 2025, government actors used lawmaking and official rhetoric to frame one faith as incompatible with American life, testing equal protection and free exercise norms. The naked religious prejudice of the sharia ban movement, a clear proxy term for efforts to ban Islam, took root in beginning in 2010; thereafter, it mostly fizzled after 2017.

It appears to have reignited in Texas.

Courts Rejected Sharia Bans—Lawmakers Brought Them Back in 2025

Snapshot: Courts have already established that banning sharia constitutes religious discrimination, that Muslims enjoy the same legal protections as other Americans, and that the Constitution is the law of the land. Undaunted by equal protection and free exercise norms, lawmakers seeking to frame Islam as incompatible with American life reignited efforts to ban sharia, introduced legislation at every level of government, and even formed a congressional caucus to advance the idea that Muslim religious identity disqualifies people from participation in American civic life.

In 2025, government actors used lawmaking and official rhetoric to frame one faith as incompatible with American life, testing equal protection and free exercise norms. The naked religious prejudice of the sharia ban movement, a clear proxy term for efforts to ban Islam, took root in beginning in 2010; thereafter, it mostly fizzled after 2017.

It appears to have reignited in Texas.

In February, the Dallas Morning News reported that Governor Abbott was attacking a planned residential community centered on a mosque and [claiming he had already banned sharia in Texas](#). In the hours before fireworks announced the birth of 2025, the fact-checking website Snopes had

previously [posted an analysis](#) of claims that Texas had banned sharia. The [claims centered on a "Trump Army" social media post from August 7, 2024](#).

By year's end, five federal bills that would effectively ban Islam in America or prohibit Muslims from coming to the United States had been introduced. These included the Preserving a Sharia Free America Act and No Shari'a Act. Some members had formed the Sharia Free America Congressional Caucus, and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard told the audience at TPUSA's AmericaFest in December that American Muslims are working to [impose "sharia law" and "Islamic principles"](#) across America through the "use of laws or violence."

Texas Governor Rick Abbott, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX), Rep. Randy Fine (R-FL), and Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) emerged as some of the most visible champions of a movement that [adopts strategies deployed by antisemites and anti-Catholic bigots and applies them to Muslims](#).

Sharia bans threaten the very notion of American religious equality by advancing the idea that Muslim religious identity disqualifies people from American life. While it is difficult to see how a sharia ban would survive a legal challenge, the advocates of such measures are senior public officials seeking to position Muslims as outside the normal protections of religious liberty and equal citizenship. Although sharia ban measures in past

years have focused domestically, in 2025 the movement latched on to immigration exclusions, possibly to increase the public appeal of their movement.

Sharia Context

“Sharia,” an Arabic word meaning “the way to water,” is a personal moral and spiritual framework that guides Muslims in prayer, charity, fasting, and ethical conduct while requiring them to obey the laws of the lands in which they live. It plays the same role in Islam that canon law plays for Catholics and halacha plays for Jews: a voluntary moral compass, not an alternative legal code. The [Fiqh Council of North America, a body of Islamic scholars based in the U.S. and Canada, stated in 2011](#), “Islamic teachings uphold religious freedom and adherence to the same universal moral values which are accepted by the majority of people of all backgrounds and upon which the US Constitution was established and according to which the Bill of Rights was enunciated.”

Sharia Ban Legislative Background

According to the Islamophobia Legislative Database, [the first anti-sharia bills did not appear until 2010](#). Between 2010 and 2024, the database identifies over 230 anti-Muslim bills that were introduced or enacted in US state legislatures. Thirteen states actually enacted anti-Muslim laws, generally diluted to symbolic foreign law bans in order to survive legal challenges. The movement peaked in

2011 and steadily declined after 2017. 2023 and 2024 saw no anti-Muslim bills introduced.

Othering and Belonging Center staff found that the most anti-Islam legislation was introduced near midterm or presidential elections (Legalizing Othering, pg. 7), hinting that bill sponsors have seen political advantage in adopting an anti-Muslim stance.

Center staff concluded that these efforts to legislate against people based on how they choose to worship God “instigate an unfounded and nonviable fear of Sharia law; otherize Islam and Muslims; foment a climate of intolerance toward Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim; and inhibit Muslims from [engaging with their religion](#).”

In 2011, the Knoxville Tea Party opposed an anti-Muslim bill which, in its original form, could have imposed prison sentences on Tennessee Muslims for donating to their local mosque. In its statement, the Tea Party noted, “We do not feel that peaceful gatherings by ourselves, our friends, or neighbors is the problem, nor do we feel that [increased surveillance by the State of Tennessee and intrusion into its citizens’ lives is the answer](#). The federal government already does far too much of that.”

The 2010 “Save Our State” amendment (SQ 755) asked Oklahoma voters to prohibit state judges from considering foreign law or sharia in their decisions. Defining sharia, the measure’s text

said, “It is based on two principal sources, the Koran and the teachings of Mohammed.” The measure was passed by over 70% of Oklahoma voters. [Awad v. Ziriax](#), a lawsuit filed by then CAIR-OK Executive Director Muneer Awad, sought to block the implementation of SQ 755, arguing that the law would violate the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment’s Free Exercise Clause as well as the Supremacy Clause. On January 10, 2012, the U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court’s decision to block implementation of the law based on Awad’s arguments.

Assessing the Oklahoma measure in CAIR’s 2011 Islamophobia report, our researchers wrote, “To our knowledge, this is the first instance of a law specifically aimed at discriminating against Muslims ever passing in the United States.”

Ban Sharia Movement Origin

David Yerushalmi, co-founder of the American Freedom Law Center and the attorney frequently identified as the man behind the sharia ban movement, drafted the template [anti-Islam bill American Laws for American Courts in 2010](#). ALAC was designed to stigmatize Muslims by falsely suggesting that American courts could be overruled by so-called “foreign law.”

Yerushalmi is very clear about his purpose. “Our greatest enemy today is Islam,” he wrote in 2006. But Muslims are not Yerushalmi’s only target. He has targeted Jews, minority racial

groups, women, and people with disabilities. In 2007, New York Jewish Week reported that Yerushalmi “says he finds truth in the view that Jews ‘[destroy their host nations like a fatal parasite](#).’” In 2006, he reportedly expressed his belief that “[most of the fundamental difference between the races are genetic](#)”. Other reporting on Yerushalmi reveals that he believes “there is a reason the founding fathers did not give women or black slaves the right to vote” and that he has further lamented that “[a retarded person can vote](#)” due to the end of literacy tests.

In 2007, the Society of Americans for National Existence (SANE), led by Yerushalmi, proposed [banning Islam and imposing prison sentences on Muslims](#). In a policy paper, the group proposed, “Whereas, adherence to Islam as a Muslim is prima facie evidence of an act in support of the overthrow of the US. Government through the abrogation, destruction, or violation of the US Constitution and the imposition of Shari’a on the American People (...) It shall be a felony punishable by 20 years in prison to knowingly act in furtherance of, or to support the adherence to Islam.”

ALAC is the template legislation Yerushalmi prepared. Sidestepping banning Islam, or even the code banning sharia, it bans foreign law. Part of ALAC reads, “it shall be the public policy of this state to protect its citizens from the application of foreign laws when the application of a foreign law will result in the violation of a right guaranteed by the constitution of this

state or of the United States." [\[Archive\]](#)
It is an open secret that in the context of ALAC, "foreign law" is intended to target Islam and Muslims.

Sharia Bills 119th Congress

CAIR research staff searched Congress' website on December 20, 2025, for the terms "sharia," "Islamic law," and "shari'a." Of the eight bills containing one of those words, five involve actions that would effectively ban Islam in the United States or ban Muslims from coming to the nation.

1. November 20: Rep. Chip Roy's (R-TX) [H.R.6225 - PAUSE Act of 2025](#) Bill says "no alien may be accorded any lawful status under the immigration laws if that alien is" "an Islamist" or "an observer of Sharia law."
2. October 15: Sen. Tommy Tuberville's (R-AL) [S.3008 - No Shari'a Act](#)
3. October 8: H.R.5722: Rep. Chip Roy's (R-TX) [Preserving a Sharia-Free America Act](#)
4. October 8: S.3009: Sen. Tommy Tuberville's (R-AL) [Preserving a Sharia-Free America Act](#)
5. September 19: Rep. Randy Fine's (R-FL) H.R.5512 [No Shari'a Act](#).

In December, Rep. Roy [spoke on the House floor](#), saying, in part, that "This is a political movement, well-funded, targeted at the American people, western civilization, our rule of law and the Constitution." Roy claimed, "Europe has fallen." Also in December, Tuberville [posted to his X account](#), "Islam is not a religion. It's a cult." [Rep. Fine posted on his X \(formerly Twitter\) account](#): "Rep. Fine on How to Deal with Mainstream Muslims: 'I don't know how you make peace with those who seek your destruction, I think you destroy them first.'"

Preserving a Sharia Free America Act

In October, Sen. Tommy [Tuberville](#) (R-AL) and Rep. [Chip Roy](#) (R-TX) introduced the Preserving a Sharia-Free America Act into their respective congressional houses. The bill was designated S. 3009 in the Senate and H.R. 5722 in the House. If enacted, it would ban anyone "who adheres to sharia" from coming to the U.S. or revoke their immigration status if the person is already in the U.S.

In a [press release announcing the House version](#) of the bill, Rep. Roy said, "America is facing an existential threat - the spread of Sharia Law. From Texas to every state in the union, instances of Sharia Law adherents have threatened the American way of life, seeking to replace our legal system and Constitution with an incompatible ideology that diminishes the rights of women, children, and individuals of different faiths."

No Shari'a Act

Introduced in September by Rep. Randy Fine (R-FL), [H.R. 5512](#), the No Shari'a Act would "prohibit the application of Shari'a in the United States where such application would violate constitutional rights."

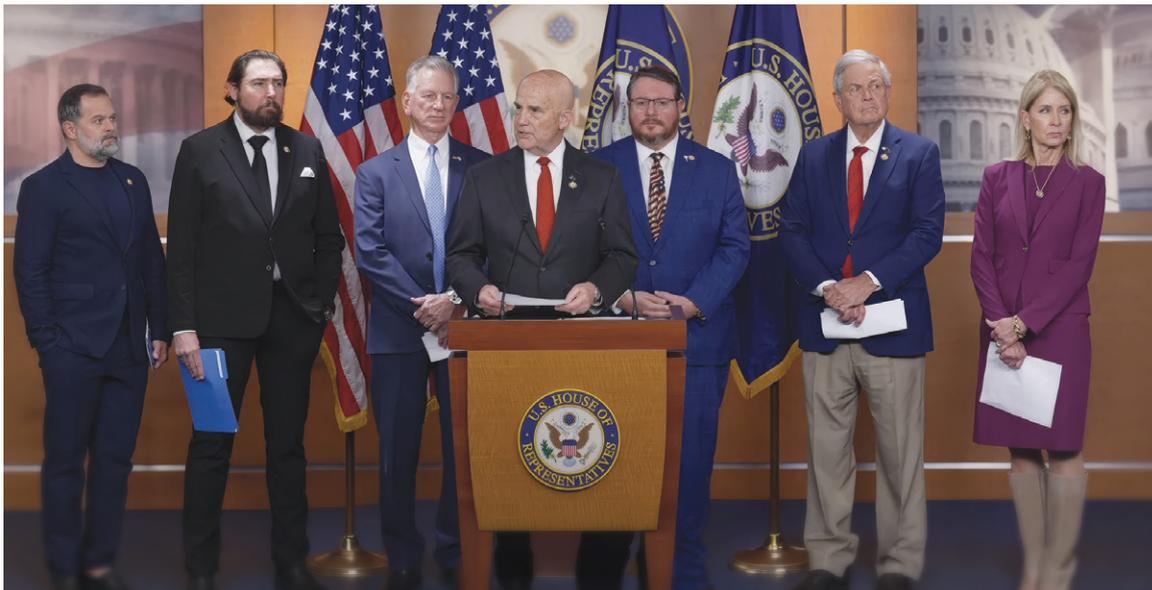
In October, Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) [announced the introduction of two bills aimed at banning the application of Sharia Law in the United States](#). One of those bills, [S. 3008](#), was a mirror of Rep. Fine's bill.

Sharia Free America Congressional Caucus

Texas representatives Chip Roy (R-TX) and Keith Self (R-TX) formed a [Congressional Sharia-Free America Caucus](#) in December 2025.

In a [press release announcing the caucus](#), Rep. Roy is quoted as saying, "Those who succumb to this political ideology seek to replace our legal system and Constitution." Rep. Self said, "We've seen what happens when nations allow this infiltration: countries like France and England are on the verge of losing their identity and sovereignty." Rep. Self added that he is proud to "make America a Sharia-free nation—once and for all." Alabama Senator Tommy Tuberville, described in the press release as "the leading voice in the Senate against Sharia," is quoted as saying, "Islam isn't a religion, it's a death cult." [[Archive](#)]

Fox News observed, "The Republicans' caucus appears largely symbolic in nature, but it's evidence of the continued [culture war raging in the country](#)."



Screenshot of a press conference held by members of the U.S. House "Sharia-Free Caucus." CAIR has designated the U.S. House "Sharia-Free Caucus" as an anti-Muslim hate group.

Security funding becomes a culture war battlefield, a new tool for baseless investigations, civil rights oversight reductions, discriminatory surveillance program ends

Snapshot: DHS tried to protect Israel from criticism by implying its nonprofit security grant would not be available to groups who did not agree to self-censor some pro-Palestinian viewpoints. The agency then reportedly considered a blanket ban on such grant to Muslims and subsequently stripped a number of Muslim organizations of grants. National Security Presidential Memo 7 authorizes baseless criminal and civil investigations into nonprofits the government views with disfavor. Several government entities at DHS and DOE were closed or reduced, reducing the public's protection from discrimination. DHS, to its credit, ended a wasteful and ineffective traveler surveillance program.

In 2025, DHS conditioned grants intended to protect nonprofits that are vulnerable to extremist attack on not boycotting Israel or Israel-based businesses. Reporting indicates that DHS then singled out Muslim organizations as uniquely suspect by proposing an explicit blanket ban on Muslims receiving the grants. This evolved into dozens of Muslim

organizations having grants stripped and DHS's award announcement not including any Muslim organizations.

DHS also reversed a longstanding tradition of generally treating places of worship and schools as "sensitive" spaces. A judge ruled the new policy likely violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the First Amendment, protecting some Maryland-based Christian and Sikh places of worship that had filed a lawsuit challenging the policy.

DHS closed its Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), the Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, and the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman. Similarly, ProPublica shows that the DOE's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) saw seven of its 12 regional offices closed and by December only "a single new resolution agreement involving racial harassment of students" had been entered. These offices provide critical accountability mechanisms intended to safeguard civil and constitutional rights.

DHS ended the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) "Quiet Skies" traveler surveillance program. CAIR welcomed the end of this costly and discriminatory failure.

CAIR offered a mixed response to a new memo on religious expression in the workplace drafted by the Office of Personnel Management, essentially the federal government's human resources

department. CAIR supported efforts to ensure that federal employees can openly practice their faith in the workplace. However, CAIR also raised concerns that certain aspects of this policy could lead to the type of discrimination it purports to oppose, especially if the government selectively upholds this policy for the benefit of only favored religious groups.

DOJ's Civil Rights Division posted press releases about at least three actions involving protecting American Muslims in 2025. One involved support for an Islamic organization's RLUIPA complaint. The others involved two individuals who threatened Sikhs and Palestinians but included Muslims in their biased statements.

DHS Cuts Muslim Security Grants, Conditions Grants on Compliance with Israel First and Anti-immigrant Policies

The Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) is a competitive grant program overseen by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It provides funds to increase security at nonprofit organizations, often places of worship, which face high risk of extremist attack.

In April, DHS [inserted language barring NSGP applicants](#) from engaging in boycotts of Israel or Israel-based businesses into the program's terms and conditions. The August version of the updated 2025 Grant Terms and Conditions removed the [April requirement](#), but in its place was an

opaque clause barring participation in a "discriminatory prohibited boycott," with no definition or explanation. The terms and conditions also mandated cooperation with ICE's immigration enforcement.

CAIR's analysis concluded that the remaining language would still allow DHS to withhold funds over boycotts of Israel or Israel-based businesses.

Given these requirements, a wide array of [Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other faith leaders pledged to](#) "halt and withdraw any applications for funding until DHS removes the alarming restrictions for grantees that require compliance with ICE, forbid diversity, equity, and inclusion programming, and prohibit legally-protected boycotts in support of Palestinian rights."

Also in 2025, DHS and the newly minted Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) blocked security grants for American Muslim nonprofits reportedly based on their religious identity and their criticism of the Israeli government's human rights abuses.

As the Trump administration took the helm of government, it initially paused all the grants and placed them under DOGE review. Later, under pressure to restart the funding, DHS proposed a "[blanket ban](#)" on security grants awarded to U.S. Muslim organizations. "I think they were worried about the optics of giving money to Muslim organizations," one insider told CNN. Six months later, dozens of Muslim organizations were stripped of their

funding, with vague allegations of ties to terrorism floated as the reason. CAIR called for DHS to reverse course as mosques, churches, temples, synagogues and other religious institutions are increasingly targeted by violence.

DHS announced in June that it was awarding “\$94,416,838 to over 512 [Jewish faith-based organizations](#)” following the tragic murder of a Jewish couple on Washington, DC. The announcement mentions no other grant recipients. The release notes that Congress appropriated the funding “in response to a surge in antisemitic threats linked to the Israel Hamas war” and that “all faith-based institutions were eligible to apply¹⁰.”

CNN said that FEMA insiders “describe those allegations as questionable” and later added that some of their insiders suggested that the allegations “came with little evidence, may be a pretext to justify the cuts.”

Karen Evans, reported to have become FEMA’s [acting administrator in December](#), may have been the person who initially proposed the blanket ban. In November, [CNN reported](#) that “According to two sources, [Karen] Evans was the first to float the idea of disqualifying all Muslim groups from security grants to FEMA officials” and that “Evans was really a driving force in another controversial episode when DHS allegedly tried to strip [security grant funding from dozens of Muslim organizations](#).”

In November, CNN reported that “According to two sources, [Karen] Evans was the first to float the idea of disqualifying all Muslim groups from security grants to FEMA officials” and that “Evans was really a driving force in another controversial episode when DHS allegedly tried to strip security grant funding from dozens of Muslim organizations.”

According to further reporting, concerns were raised that a number of Muslim-led organizations critical of Israel were receiving federal grants. Evans allegedly proposed banning all Muslim organizations and was told to not put such proposals in writing to avoid legal exposure. CNN noted, "On multiple occasions, she sent back lists of Muslim organizations that had cleared background checks to DHS's intelligence office."

A report circulated by the Middle East Forum played a role in DHS's actions, according to both CNN and Fox News.

The Middle East Forum, whose Knesset Liaison [used to advise Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#), is famous for its founder's belief that "[Western European societies are unprepared for the massive immigration of brown-skinned peoples cooking strange foods and maintaining different standards of hygiene...All immigrants bring exotic customs and attitudes, but Muslim customs are more troublesome than most.](#)"

Fox News [reported](#) in August that DHS was reviewing grants often awarded to bolster security at religious sites, particularly those given to Muslim organizations. Fox News noted that this was occurring in part "in response to the MEF's findings" in a study it circulated early in 2025.

[According to CNN](#), "After the report's publication, DOGE circulated it to FEMA staff, instructing them to ensure that none of the nonprofits named

would receive funding, according to two sources." When grants were released in the spring, "No Muslim nonprofits were included in the announcement."

[NSPM-7 Empowers Baseless Criminal and Civil Investigations into Nonprofits the Government Views with Disfavor](#)

[National Security Presidential Memorandum \(NSPM-7\) on Countering Domestic Terrorism and Organized Political Violence](#) was issued in September.

According to the Trump Administration, "common threads" motivating political violence in the United States include "anti-Americanism, anti-capitalism, and anti-Christianity; support for the overthrow of the United States Government; extremism on migration, race, and gender; and hostility towards those who hold traditional American views on family, religion, and morality."

Neither NSPM-7 nor the executive order designating Antifa as a domestic terrorist organization specify what beliefs or behaviors qualify as "anti-Americanism" or define any of the other vague terms.

This likely indicates that the administration will interpret the term as broadly as possible and leave it to courts to determine where the line is.

In [commentary on the Memorandum](#), Adam Goldstein of the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) wrote, "This is the White House directly identifying beliefs, pointing the finger at them, and saying, 'These are the suspicious people we need to watch.' In America, we shouldn't target people for their ideologies. We should target them for their actions, full stop."

Issued nearly simultaneously with the memorandum was a Trump threat to investigate George Soros' Open Society Foundation (OSF). Responding to the threat to OSF, Diane Yentel, [head of the Council of Non-Profits](#) said, in part, "Baseless criminal and civil investigations into nonprofits are not about preventing violence—they are about silencing organizations and individuals with which the administration disagrees."

A few days later, DOJ instructed prosecutors to [prepare to launch investigations into the organization](#). The Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service also appeared to be opening investigations. To justify the investigations, DOJ pointed to a report by the conservative Capital Research Center (CRC). [Forbes reports](#) that CRC president Scott Walter told the [Times](#) his group had not found evidence that Soros' philanthropy had committed a crime and noted they were "surprised" that the DOJ suggested prosecutors use the report.

DHS Removes Traditional Sanctuary Protections from Places of Worship

The practice of treating places of worship as places of sanctuary has roots in Greek and Roman civilizations and was adopted by early Christian churches. U.S. law does not automatically treat churches, mosques, or synagogues as off-limits to law enforcement, but it does protect them from actions that seriously interfere with religious worship.

In January, CAIR expressed strong opposition to a [DHS policy change removing longstanding restrictions on enforcement actions in traditional places of sanctuary](#), such as houses of worship and schools. CAIR warned that these changes would undermine public trust, discourage vulnerable communities from seeking essential community and religious services, and chill First Amendment rights by deterring lawful religious gatherings and protests.

A month later, a federal judge in Maryland ruled that the policy [likely violates](#) the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the First Amendment. The judge blocked Trump administration enforcement actions in the [facilities of a small number of Quaker, Baptist and Sikh denominations and congregations](#) who had filed the lawsuit.

DHS Closes Offices Intended to Safeguard Civil and Constitutional Rights

CAIR condemned the [Trump administration's closure of critical oversight offices within DHS, including the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties \(CRCL\)](#), the Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, and the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman, as "a dangerous erosion of critical accountability mechanisms intended to safeguard civil and constitutional rights." These offices, already significantly understaffed, played an essential role in training and oversight to ensure that DHS agencies—including Customs and Border Protection (CBP), TSA, ICE, and others—respected constitutional rights and civil liberties of all Americans and residents.

Dismantling the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights

On June 4, [CAIR sent a letter](#) to the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce in advance of a hearing titled "Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Department of Education," which featured U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon. CAIR expressed concern over actions by the Trump administration to dismantle the Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), which enforces civil rights laws in schools, and to criminalize student speech in support of Palestinian human rights. The letter highlights cases of student activists who

expressed dissent against Israel's war on Gaza and were detained or threatened with deportation under Cold War-era legal provisions.

Shortly after the Trump administration came into power, ProPublica reported that civil rights investigations had been paused. The number of new cases being opened was diminished: 20 compared to 250 in the same period the previous year. New cases shifted from being responsive to public reports to being directed by Trump administration priorities: "getting rid of gender-neutral bathrooms, banning transgender athletes from participating in women's sports, and alleged antisemitism or [discrimination against white students](#)." The pause was later lifted, "but only to allow [disability investigations to proceed](#)." In March, about 300 OCR staff were laid off and "seven of the 12 regional civil rights offices" were closed.

In a December analysis, ProPublica reported, "Nearly a year since he took office, the department's Office for Civil Rights has not entered into a single new resolution agreement involving [racial harassment of students](#)." Normally, according to ProPublica, dozens of racial harassment cases are resolved each year.

DHS Ends Quiet Skies

In June, DHS [announced the end of its Quiet Skies](#) traveler surveillance program. The [DHS announcement](#) said that the surveillance program "failed to stop a single terrorist attack while

costing US taxpayers \$200 million a year.” The announcement also said, “DHS and TSA have uncovered documents, correspondence, and timelines that clearly highlight the inconsistent application of Quiet Skies and watch listing programs, circumventing security policies to benefit politically aligned friends and family at the expense of the American people.”

CAIR praised the move in a formal statement submitted for the record during the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ hearing titled “Examining the Weaponization of the Quiet Skies Program.” In [its written statement](#), CAIR applauded the committee

for recognizing that TSA’s “Quiet Skies” program was a costly and discriminatory failure that operated without statutory authority. CAIR emphasized that the program was an outgrowth of the broader federal terrorism watchlist system, which continues to impose unconstitutional harms on American Muslims and other minority communities.

Religious Expression in the Workplace Memo

In July, the Office of Personnel Management issued a memo addressing religious expression in the workplace. In its reporting, [CBS News said](#), “That includes the right to



In 2025, government entities often justified their actions with politically charged language, making big moves via executive action, memos, and interim policies rather than through democratic lawmaking and consensus. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

discuss religion, engage in 'communal religious expressions' and display items such as bibles, crucifixes and mezuzahs on their desks, the memo states." The memo also indicated that "During a break, an employee may engage another in polite discussion of why his faith is correct and why the non-adherent should re-think his religious beliefs (...) However, if the non-adherent requests such attempts to stop, the employee should honor the request."

CAIR supported efforts to ensure that federal employees can openly practice their faith in the workplace. Permitting employees to pray together, discuss religion with each other, and wear visible signs of their faith are positive steps if all employees—including American Muslims—receive the benefits and protections of these accommodations on equal terms.

CAIR raised concerns that certain aspects of this policy could lead to the type of discrimination it purports to oppose, especially if the government selectively upholds this policy for the benefit of only favored religious groups. Other aspects of the policy, such as explicitly allowing security to place religious objects on display to the public at entrances to federal buildings and permitting supervisors to proselytize to their employees, could obviously lead to an appearance of religious bias and a hostile workplace. Finally, employees may fear retaliation if they tell a supervisor to stop efforts to have the employee rethink their religious beliefs.

At the time of this report's writing, CAIR has no indications that the policy is not neutrally enforced.

Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division Uplifted Three Incidents Involving Protecting American Muslims in 2025

DOJ's Civil Rights Division posted press releases about at least three actions involving the protection of American Muslims in 2025. In January, Texan Bushan Athale pled guilty to several counts after he threatened a Sikh organization. While making his threats, "Athale again used violent, sexual imagery to express his hatred toward Sikhs as well as [Muslims and spouted antisemitic rhetoric](#)." In April, the Civil Rights Division supported "a claim by a religious Islamic organization that the Town of Oyster [Bay violated its rights under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act \(RLUIPA\)](#)." Oyster Bay is on New York's Long Island. Anti-Palestinian racist Kevin Brent Buchanan pled guilty in July for making threats to injure another person after he [targeted a pro-Palestinian organization](#) and left messages saying things such as "I hope every Muslim in the United States [expletive] croaks."

When Definitions Threaten to Censor Criticism of Foreign Nations

Snapshot: The IHRA working definition of antisemitism is widely seen as conflating criticism of Israel with antisemitism. This raises issues of equal protection, government neutrality toward viewpoint and religion, free speech, and academic freedom. President Trump, federal legislators, and state legislators all referenced it or tried to impose its censorship by enacting it into law.

Adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Association's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism into law and policy raises issues of equal protection, government neutrality toward viewpoint and religion, free speech, and academic freedom.

President Trump's Executive Order 13899 refers federal agencies to it but does not establish it as a legal standard. Federal and state legislators across the U.S. attempted to enact bills that would enshrine the working definition into law; Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt signed two IHRA-based bills into law, and California Governor Gavin Newsom enacted a law that indirectly uses the definition.

While the above actions are generally accompanied by statements that the actions cannot infringe on normal free speech rights, institutional threat assessments such as the possibility of federal investigations,

funding pressure, and litigation are all pushing schools and agencies to overcorrect—often affecting Muslim, Arab and other anti-genocide voices disproportionately when their protected speech is recharacterized as discrimination.

Problematic Issues with Adopting the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism

According to Kenneth Stern, its lead author, the IHRA working definition of antisemitism "[...was created primarily so that European data collectors could know what to include and exclude](#). That way antisemitism could be monitored better over time and across borders." Stern adds, "It was never intended to be a campus hate speech code" because using it as such "will harm not only pro-Palestinian advocates, but also Jewish students and faculty, and the academy itself."

The definition includes 11 examples of contemporary antisemitism; seven of these involve criticism of the state of Israel. "But starting in 2010," Stern adds, "rightwing Jewish groups took the 'working definition', which had some examples about Israel (such as holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of Israel, and denying Jews the right to self-determination), and decided to weaponize it with Title VI cases."

In 2025, Stern, a self-identified Zionist, told NPR that the Trump Administration is "[absolutely weaponizing antisemitism](#)."

Stern characterized the Trump administration's use of the definition as an assault on free speech and higher education: "I think it's a total assault on the university, which has been a very important institution for Jews over the last number of decades. JD Vance had talked about following the playbook of [Victor] Orban in Hungary on dealing with education. I think that's what we're seeing unfold."

Speaking to the Washington Post in April 2025, Stern said "[I think it's bad policy, and as a lawyer I think it's unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination.](#)" He added, "I am a Zionist and Israel is important to me, but there are young Jews whose Judaism leads them to a different point of view."

This conflation of antisemitism and criticism of Israel has been criticized by the [ACLU](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), the [Center for Constitutional Rights](#), and [hundreds of academics](#) and [Jewish organizations](#).

In 2023, over 100 Israeli and international civil rights organizations asked the UN to reject the IHRA definition. In its coverage of that request, the Guardian noted, "Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have both been accused of antisemitism under the IHRA definition over detailed reports saying that Israel practices [a form of apartheid](#), an accusation also levelled by Israeli human rights groups."

Executive Order 13899

President Donald Trump's Executive Order 13899 explicitly instructs federal agencies enforcing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to consider the working definition and its accompanying examples when evaluating evidence of discrimination, while also describing the definition as "non-legally binding." The order does not adopt IHRA as a controlling legal standard but frames it as guidance that agencies may use to assess intent in specific cases. It also states that enforcement must not infringe on rights protected by federal law or the First Amendment, underscoring that determinations should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Senate Does Not Advance IHRA Bill

If enacted, Senator Tim Scott's (R-NC) Antisemitism Awareness Act (S.558) would require the Department of Education to adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.

In April, CAIR welcomed the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee decision to delay a vote on the Act following bipartisan concerns over its conflation of criticism of the Israeli government with antisemitism. At the same time, the Senate HELP Committee adopted several amendments affirming First Amendment protections, including the right to criticize the war in Gaza, oppose Israeli leadership, and participate in campus protests and non-violent speech. These measures received backing from all Democrats

and a few Republicans, including Senators Rand Paul (R-KY) and Susan Collins (R-MA).

State IHRA Bills

Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs vetoed a proposed bill which [its supporters asserted was aligned](#) "with the internationally recognized IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism." CAIR-AZ condemned Arizona House Bill 2867 (HB2867) as a dangerous attack on free speech and academic freedom. According to CAIR, HB2867 was written so broadly and vaguely that it would chill open discussion in classrooms, punish educators for addressing international human rights, and leave schools vulnerable to lawsuits for allowing honest dialogue about Israel and Palestine. [In reporting by the Associated Press](#), Gov. Hobbs is said to have characterized the bill as an attack on teachers rather than a tool to fight antisemitism. The Associated Press also noted, "[Opponents said the bill aimed to silence people who want to speak out on the oppression of Palestinians and opened up educators to personal legal liability in lawsuits students could file.](#)"

CAIR-CA condemned Governor Gavin Newsom's decision to sign Assembly Bill (AB) 715 (Zbur & Addis), calling it a classroom censorship law that shields a foreign government—Israel—from legitimate discussion of its genocide in Gaza and aligns California with the Trump administration's campaign against free speech and academic freedom. While not explicitly an IHRA-

based bill, a lawsuit "[filed by Jenin Younes, national legal director of the American-Arab Anti-discrimination Committee](#), claims that AB 715, which is set to take effect Jan. 1, 2026, is unconstitutionally vague." Coverage of the lawsuit notes that it "directs districts to rely on the Biden administration's National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. This federal guide, in turn, refers to the working definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance." In December, CAIR-CA, along with signatories from more than 110 civil rights, education, and community-based organizations, [sent a letter](#) to state lawmakers calling on them to honor their commitment to providing necessary clean-up legislation for newly implemented Assembly Bill (AB) 715. In the letter, the Coalition emphasized that during both the Senate and Assembly Education Committee hearings, Assemblymembers Rick Chavez Zbur and Dawn Addis repeatedly affirmed their "ironclad commitment" to working with education stakeholders to correct AB 715's most concerning provisions. These assurances were made in direct response to concerns that AB 715 may be applied in ways that deter honest discussion, stifle critical inquiry, and create confusion or fear around teaching subjects that are essential to a comprehensive education.

New Jersey State [Assembly Bill A3558](#) sought to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism into state law and would chill free speech on Israel's genocide in Gaza. The bill did not pass by the end of the 2025 legislating session.

Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt signed two bills in May that were criticized by free speech advocates. SB 942 and SB 991 enshrine the IHRA definition of antisemitism into state law, including the so-called “contemporary examples,” which have been used to stifle ongoing protests surrounding the violence carried out in Gaza and in Palestine since October 2023. These bills went into effect in November 2025.

Wisconsin legislators also considered a bill, [AB 446](#), with similar effects as other states. As of the time of this writing, its bill has not advanced.

(FL) A Chilling Effect by Design: The Push to Penalize Association with Muslim Advocacy

Snapshot: Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and other state officials used the power of their offices to cast Muslim advocacy and institutions as suspects, raise the risk of lawful Muslim participation in Florida life, and push Muslims toward the margins of protected religious and civic life. This included targeting CAIR, officials suggesting Islamic schools are inherently threatening, and an effort to ban sharia.

Florida officials launched an assault on Muslim life in 2025. While not as wide-ranging as the efforts of Texas officials, it followed the same pattern of using state authority to cast Muslims as suspicious, threatening,

and less deserving of full participation in public life. Gov. DeSantis’ Executive Order 25-244 suggests that CAIR-Florida and other Muslim groups may be treated as “terrorist organizations.” Other episodes, including state leaders questioning Islamic schools’ participation in voucher programs and renewed Sharia Ban legislative efforts, fill out the playbook of portraying Muslim religious practice as inherently incompatible with Florida’s civic life.

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Desantis' Unconstitutional Executive Order 25-244

Gov. DeSantis' Executive Order 25-244 directs the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Florida Highway Patrol undertake "all lawful measures to prevent unlawful activities in Florida..." and then directs all other Executive and Cabinet Agencies, unless federal or state law prohibits such an action, to deny the order's target from "receiving any contract, employment, funds, or other benefit or privilege from such Executive or Cabinet Agency or any entity regulated by such Executive or Cabinet Agency or from any County or Municipality of the State."

CAIR asserted that [the accusations in EO 25-244 distort CAIR's work and echo long-debunked conspiracy theories used by anti-Muslim hate groups](#), characterizing the executive order as dangerous and unconstitutional. In a [letter to Governor DeSantis sent prior to filing a lawsuit challenging his order, CAIR wrote](#), "The real reason anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian politicians obsessively target CAIR and other American Muslim institutions is because of our steadfast advocacy for Palestinian rights. Indeed, your office spent years serving the Israeli government to the detriment of Florida. You hosted your first official cabinet meeting in Israel. You diverted at least \$25 million in Florida taxpayer dollars to the Israeli government's bonds. You issued an order threatening to shut down every Florida college's

pro-Palestine student group, only to retreat when CAIR sued you in federal court. You repeatedly embraced the wanted war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu. You ignored the plight of a Florida teenager kidnapped by the Israeli military and tortured in an Israeli prison for nine months."

As of the time of this writing, legal action is pending.

Florida Attorney General and Chief Financial Officer Allege Islamic Schools Undermine Western Values

In October, Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier, Chief Financial Officer Blaise Ingoglia, and Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson questioned the legality of state funds going to Islamic schools, focusing on two in particular. In its reporting, WRLN notes, "Neither of the schools name [Sharia law on their websites.](#)"



Mobile documentation of X/Twitter post by Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier regarding school voucher programs.

In an October 27 article in the Florida Phoenix, the Florida officials [are reported to have alleged that the schools undermine western values.](#)

While [sharing a tweet by Islamophobe Amy Mek, Utmeier wrote](#), "Sharia law seeks to destroy and supplant the pillars of our republican form of government and is incompatible with the Western tradition. The use of taxpayer-funded school vouchers to promote Sharia law likely contravenes Florida law and undermines our national security."

Simpson told the Florida Phoenix, "Schools that indoctrinate Sharia law should not be a part of our taxpayer-funded school voucher program." Ingoglia told the paper his office may audit the schools.

Florida HB 119, the No Shari'a Act

Florida Representative Hillary Cassel's Florida [House Bill 119](#), the "No Shari'a Act," mirrors the language of David Yerushalmi's "[American Laws for American Courts](#)" (ALAC) model legislation.

[Governor DeSantis endorsed](#) the bill, writing on social media in December, "Members of the FL Legislature are crafting legislation to stop the creep of sharia law."

This was not the first time such legislation had surfaced in Florida. Between 2011 and 2014, lawmakers repeatedly [introduced at least 10](#) "anti-foreign law" and "anti-Sharia" measures that were widely condemned as unconstitutional and rooted in bigotry. The measures all ultimately failed to pass.



Muslim engagement in American civic life ensures democracy works for everyone, not just a select few. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

Lived Experiences of Islamophobia

This section highlights how Islamophobia shapes the lived experiences of American Muslims and the efforts to secure justice for them. It presents a range of incident types and geographic locations¹¹. We cannot include full details in every case because many matters are protected by attorney-client privilege, and we honor clients' decisions to keep information private. These anecdotes put a human face on the data presented earlier. All incidents occurred in 2025 or reflect key actions taken that year, though litigation can take years to resolve and criminal cases are often tried or sentenced months after the initial incident. This section contains sensitive material, including accounts of violence and harassment, that some readers may find disturbing.

Anti-Mosque Incidents

Arizona. On August 3, Mark Antonio Martinez allegedly called the Masjid Bilal Rabah Mosque and made a series of threats that were recorded. During thirteen minutes of audio that was later released, Martinez reportedly said, "We're gonna have to crusade all you guys again," and claimed he would be "one of the attackers." The building was occupied by a number of children who were attending weekend school at the time. Reporting on the

incident notes that Martinez told a detective that he has strong opinions on Israel and [thinks Muslims are "here to convert everyone."](#)

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Florida. Alan Winston Filion of Lancaster, California, admitted in federal court to making the threat against Masjid Al Hayy Mosque in Florida's Seminole County in 2023. [In early 2025, he was sentenced to four years in prison.](#) Filion reportedly contacted law enforcement authorities and said he was going to carry out a mass shooting in the name of Satan; he is also reported to have had an AR-15 assault weapon and pipe bombs and to have played a recording of gunfire in the background.

California. Following Taraweeh, [an assailant reportedly shouted](#), "Are you Palestinian?! Are you Hamas?!" before pushing an elderly man. The attacker then turned to the elderly man's daughter, yelling "You people!" and "I love Israel!" while continuing to verbally harass them. The worshippers were part of the South Valley Islamic Community Center congregation which was using the Morgan Hill Community Center to accommodate a large Ramadan crowd. A CAIR-SFBA attorney worked with the victims. The man faced hate crimes charges and entered a court-ordered restorative diversion program.

Minnesota. Jackie Rahm Little pled guilty for his role in terrorizing the Muslim community with multiple mosque arsons. According to court documents, on April 23, 2023, at approximately 7:00 p.m., Little set fire to a bathroom inside the Masjid Omar Islamic Center. On April 24, just before 7:00 p.m., he was captured

on surveillance video entering the Masjid Al-Rahma (Mercy Center). Shortly thereafter, a fire broke out on the third floor of the mosque, forcing an evacuation of the building while worshipers and children were inside. Little was arrested on April 29, 2023, in Mankato. [He was indicted on one count of arson and one count of damage to religious property](#) before entering his guilty plea in September.

Oklahoma. A proposal by the Islamic Society of Tulsa to build a new community center, which would include a mosque, health clinic, and retail space, was met with a wave of Islamophobic commentary on social media. The December 12, 2025, meeting of the Broken Arrow City Planning Commission included over 4 hours of commentary from city residents and neighbors, including statements that Islam is incompatible with American values and that a mosque was not welcome in the city. As of the time of this writing, the community's plans remain on hold.

Banking Discrimination

Virginia. CAIR called on [PayPal to stop freezing and denying transactions](#) involving common Muslim names. Compass Homeschool Enrichment, a Virginia-based educational program that serves a large population of Muslim families, relies on PayPal to process standardized tuition payments. Compass provided CAIR with a comprehensive dataset of its client transactions; according to

Compass' records, PayPal held 88 transactions over the years, 72 percent of which involved parents or students with common Muslim names. All of the transactions that PayPal ultimately denied, or left in limbo for months to years, involved common Muslim names. By contrast, identical tuition payments for the same classes made by non-Muslim parents reportedly cleared within minutes. Some of the

CAIR called on PayPal to stop freezing and denying transactions involving common Muslim names.

affected payments reportedly remained pending from seven months up to nearly three years, creating cash-flow uncertainty for the school and hardship for families. In one instance, a PayPal representative allegedly requested a child's birth certificate to clear a routine domestic tuition payment. CAIR noted that the Compass dataset aligns with similar reports received from around the country involving Muslim-owned small businesses, religious nonprofits, and individual donors. For example, in our 2024 civil rights report, we detailed how a Maryland-based Muslim submitted a complaint to CAIR after a routine

domestic transaction to an Islamic place of worship in Ohio was reportedly delayed by PayPal "[i]n light of the ongoing national emergency in Israel."

Education Discrimination (Higher Education)

Illinois. CAIR-Chicago [condemned a settlement announced](#) in late 2025 between Northwestern University and the Trump administration that restored approximately \$790 million in previously frozen federal research funding in exchange for a \$75 million payment and the termination of the 2024 Deering Meadow Agreement, a 2024 pact reached with student activists that had acknowledged and supported pro-Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, African, and Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) student advocates. In April 2024, after five days of pro-Palestinian encampments on campus, Northwestern and student organizers reached an agreement which [included commitments to enhanced protest protections and support for marginalized students](#). CAIR-Chicago criticized the decision to terminate the Deering Meadow Agreement as a troubling capitulation to political pressure and a betrayal of the student negotiators who had secured the original agreement in good faith. CAIR's national office and CAIR-Chicago had [previously designated the Northwestern University as a "hostile campus" under the Unhostile Campus campaign](#), citing a pattern of actions contributing

to a hostile climate for Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, Jewish, and other students, staff, and faculty opposing the genocide in Gaza.

Michigan. CAIR-Michigan called for an independent and transparent investigation after reports surfaced that the University of Michigan hired private undercover investigators to surveil and intimidate anti-genocide student groups. [According to reporting in The Guardian](#), the university used private operatives to trail students on and off campus, eavesdrop on their conversations, and secretly record them. The Guardian's reporting asserts that “the university paid at least \$800,000 between June 2023 and

September 2024 to City Shield’s parent company, Ameri-Shield.” Students who were followed said the surveillance functioned as intimidation. Some reported that the investigators cursed at them, threatened them, and in one documented instance drove a car toward a student, forcing them to jump out of the way. Shortly after the Guardian's reporting, [the program was canceled](#). CAIR’s national office and CAIR-MI [had previously designated the University of Michigan as a “hostile campus” under the Unhostile Campus campaign](#), citing a pattern of actions contributing to a hostile climate for Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, Jewish, and other students, staff, and faculty opposing the genocide in Gaza.



CAIR-LA announces a lawsuit alleging Orange County deputies indiscriminately arrested protesters and forcibly removed the hijabs, or religious headscarves, of two Muslim women. (Credit: CAIR-LA)

New Jersey. The U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) found that Rutgers University “likely operated a hostile environment based on national origin/shared ancestry in university programs or activities without redress as required under Title VI.” The OCR concluded that Rutgers University failed to respond effectively to discrimination reports made Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim students. The office also found that the university likely violated Title VI by removing posters and memorials placed by Palestinian students aiming to highlight the atrocities of the ongoing genocide in Palestine. The probe by OCR came in

response to a complaint filed by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and CAIR-NJ in April 2024. Additionally, OCR found that Rutgers University failed to protect its Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim students from hostile actions by third parties, such as doxxing and harassment.

Georgia. In a resolution, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) set out several substantive remedial measures Emory University must take after OCR identified important Title VI compliance concerns at the University in the wake of the alleged harassment of students based on their Palestinian,



CAIR-Georgia welcomed the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) issued in a case of 133 student plaintiffs from across the country, represented by Kuck Baxter Immigration. (Credit: CAIR-GA)

Arab, Muslim, and Black identities. [OCR stated in a letter to Emory University President Fenves](#) that “the University may have contributed to and at a minimum appears to have failed to respond promptly or effectively to a hostile environment based on race and national origin, including shared Palestinian, Muslim, and/or Arab ancestry (hereinafter “national origin”) consistent with the requirements of Title VI; and 2) that the University’s policies and procedures for responding to reports of discriminatory harassment based on race and national origin may impede its ability to provide a prompt and effective response.” The complaint leading to the resolution was filed jointly by CAIR-Georgia and Palestine Legal on April 5th, 2024, on behalf of Emory Students for Justice in Palestine and other complainants. CAIR’s national office and CAIR-GA had [previously designated Emory University as a “hostile campus” under the Unhostile Campus campaign](#), citing a pattern of actions contributing to a hostile climate for Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, Jewish, and other students, staff, and faculty opposing the genocide in Gaza.

Georgia. CAIR-GA joined Emory Faculty members Professor Noëlle McAfee and Emil’ Keme, who were violently arrested on Emory’s campus in April 2024 during peaceful student protests, and a large group of Emory students in calling on Emory University to [reinstate and drop the charges against Umaymah Mohammad](#), a Palestinian Emory MD/PhD student.

Mohammad was wrongfully targeted and suspended by Emory School of Medicine (SOM) Administrators in November 2024 following an interview with the ‘Democracy Now!’ news outlet. Emory SOM claimed that Ms. Mohammad violated “principles of professionalism and mutual respect” in the interview where she questioned why an unnamed Emory SOM faculty serving as a reserve officer in the Israeli military was allowed to be “teaching medical students and residents how to take care of patients.” Following the interview, Emory’s SOM launched formal Conduct Code proceedings and suspended Ms. Mohammad. [Emory University’s own Committee for Open Expression \(CFOE\) launched an independent investigation and concluded](#) in its report that Ms. Mohammad’s speech was “protected by the Emory Respect for Open Expression Policy” and recommended that proceedings against Ms. Mohammad be dropped. CAIR’s national office and CAIR-GA had [previously designated Emory University as a “hostile campus” under the Unhostile Campus campaign](#), citing a pattern of actions contributing to a hostile climate for Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, Jewish, and other students, staff, and faculty opposing the genocide in Gaza.

California. The Greater Los Angeles Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-LA) [announced the successful resolution of a federal civil rights complaint](#) filed against the University of California, Los

Angeles' (UCLA) David Geffen School of Medicine (DGSOM) for allegedly violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 2024, CAIR-LA filed a federal civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) on behalf of its client, a Muslim Palestinian-American medical student who experienced multiple incidents of discrimination based on race, national origin, and religion during a pediatrics clerkship at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center in the fall of 2023. After reporting the discrimination, the student faced punitive and retaliatory measures, including deliberate negative evaluations and a failing grade in the pediatrics clerkship. In response to the complaint, OCR agreed to address the concerns regarding the treatment of CAIR-LA's client by superiors and clerkship co-chairs as part of a broader agreement with the University of California which compelled UCLA to resolve complaints of national origin bias filed by Palestinian, Arab, and Jewish students. The DGSOM also agreed to remove the student's failing grade. Separately, CAIR's national office and CAIR-LA had [designated UCLA as a "hostile campus" under the Unhostile Campus campaign](#), citing a pattern of actions contributing to a hostile climate for Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, Jewish, and other students, staff, and faculty opposing the genocide in Gaza.

Employment Discrimination

Maryland. CAIR filed a lawsuit against Sligo Middle School in Montgomery County after the school prohibited teachers from [displaying the Palestinian flag while continuing to allow other national flags, including the Israeli flag, to be displayed on campus](#). According to the complaint, a Sligo Middle School teacher displayed several small flags on her homeroom door for more than a year to celebrate student diversity without incident. Principal Peter Crable later ordered her to remove only the Palestinian flag, reportedly telling her it could be seen as "supporting terrorism," even though the school prominently displayed many other flags throughout the building, including the Israeli flag in the cafeteria. The complaint alleges that this selective prohibition violated the teacher's First Amendment rights by engaging in viewpoint discrimination.

Florida. A Muslim firefighter in Jacksonville was allegedly forced to break his Ramadan fast by a district chief. The firefighter reported that the chief yelled at him and threatened to cut his hours and pay if he refused to eat with his team during the fasting period. A video of the incident circulated online, prompting public concern and internal review. Following the report, [the fire official was placed under investigation and reassigned to desk duty while the case was reviewed](#).

A Muslim firefighter in Jacksonville was allegedly forced to break his Ramadan fast by a district chief. The firefighter reported that the chief yelled at him and threatened to cut his hours and pay if he refused to eat with his team during the fasting period.

New Jersey. CAIR-NJ condemned the termination of Imam Khalil Adem, a longtime healthcare professional and respected religious leader, by Hackensack Meridian Health [after he expressed his views on the ongoing genocide in Palestine](#). Imam Adem has since filed a civil rights lawsuit against the healthcare system. [According to reports](#), Imam Adem had worked for Hackensack Meridian Health for more than a decade. He was placed on administrative leave and then fired after delivering a sermon and posting on social media about the violence and suffering in Palestine. His comments drew backlash from pro-Israel and anti-Muslim groups, despite his positive employment record and longstanding service to both his patients and his community.

Texas. CAIR [filed a lawsuit](#) against Meta for discriminatory treatment of Mohammed Feras Majeed over pro-Palestine, anti-genocide advocacy. CAIR's lawsuit alleges that Meta violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Chapter 21 of the Texas Labor Code. Mohammed Feras Majeed, who is of Indian origin, was hired at Meta in 2018. As a Muslim, he felt it was part of his religious duty to speak up about Palestine within the workplace and on his social media pages. Within workplace chat platforms, Majeed had seen discussions of political topics such as Ukraine and the Black Lives Matter movement, along with sympathy for the Israeli victims after October 7, 2023. However, when Majeed attempted to discuss Palestine and his prayers for Muslims impacted by Israel's genocide, he suffered adverse employment action in response, including formal reprimands, content removal, verbal warnings, and threats of further discipline, all stemming from his religiously motivated expression. CAIR's lawsuit states, in part, that "Meta discriminated against Plaintiff based on his religious identity as a Muslim by forcing him to choose between expressing his sincerely held religious belief and maintaining his employment. Meta silenced Plaintiff's expressions of religious solidarity with the Muslim community during the ongoing genocide in Gaza—a subject central to Plaintiff's faith—while permitting similarly situated non-Muslim employees to speak freely about other humanitarian and

political crises.” Note: While Meta is headquartered in California, the claims centered on events that occurred in the company’s Austin location.

Maryland. CAIR’s Maryland chapter called for an investigation of alleged Islamophobic and discriminatory behavior targeting a Muslim employee at a Safeway store in Ellicott City, Maryland. According to a formal complaint shared with CAIR, the Muslim employee, who wears a religious garment known as an abaya, was allegedly mistreated and mocked by a male employee who singled out her attire multiple times, stating in part, “You dress like you belong in another country.” In addition, the employee reported enduring sustained verbal mistreatment and workplace hostility from a pharmacist dating back to July 2024. The pharmacist allegedly made inappropriate personal remarks about the employee’s physical appearance and professional competence, while also reportedly displaying a pattern of belittling and exclusionary behavior. These incidents allegedly led to a toxic work environment and had a significant impact on the employee’s mental health and well-being. The employee was reluctant to report these incidents internally due to fear of retaliation and concerns over job security, as it was her only source of income.

Maryland. CAIR filed a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) against the Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) on behalf of a Muslim paramedic who was allegedly wrongfully suspended without pay for refusing to shave his religiously mandated beard. Othmane El Omari, a devout Muslim, had sought to maintain facial hair in accordance with his sincerely held religious beliefs since beginning his employment with BCFD. Despite his service and dedication, BCFD has repeatedly denied his requests for accommodation, enforcing grooming policies in a discriminatory manner that has hindered his ability to work free from harassment and unequal treatment. The Department has asserted that its grooming policy is necessary to ensure an adequate seal on respirator masks. However, OSHA regulations expressly permit employees to maintain facial hair provided they can successfully pass a respirator fit test. Notwithstanding this standard, BCFD had declined to administer a fit test to Mr. El Omari and instead had enforced the policy against him alone. BCFD had permitted other EMS personnel and firefighters to wear facial hair without consequence. Many employees, including supervisors, have maintained facial hair throughout their employment and carried out their duties safely and effectively. Yet BCFD has singled out Mr. El Omari for disciplinary action, applying its grooming policy against him while ignoring violations by others.

Free Speech/First Amendment

Missouri. [CAIR filed a lawsuit against University of Missouri](#) Chancellor and System President Dr. Mun Choi after he prohibited Mizzou Students for Justice in Palestine (MSJP) from participating in the Homecoming parade in both 2024 and 2025. The lawsuit argued that the exclusion was unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination against pro-Palestinian speech. In 2024, MSJP, a registered student organization, had applied to participate in the annual parade. Three days before the event, Dr. Choi personally denied their application, citing “disturbing” behavior by students at other universities. Before the denial, university officials had urged MSJP not to carry a banner that read “END THE GENOCIDE.” Meanwhile, other political messages – including “MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN” banners displayed by a fraternity – were allowed. CAIR’s lawsuit challenged the disparate treatment and the university’s suppression of anti-genocide speech. “To permit this kind of viewpoint discrimination is to silence students who are speaking out for human rights,” CAIR argued in the filing. In September 2025, U.S. District Judge Stephen Bough [granted a preliminary injunction ordering the university](#) to allow MSJP to participate in the 2025 Homecoming parade. The court found that Dr. Choi likely violated the First Amendment and failed to demonstrate any legitimate safety concerns. “It’s just so wonderful to know that

we’re going to be able to show off Palestinian culture and all of these things to the community,” said [Lily Dunn](#), MSJP’s current president, after the court ruling.

Hate Crime

Florida. The University of South Florida (USF) Police Department filed felony hate crime-enhanced charges against Christopher Svochak, Richard Penskoski, and Ricardo Yopez. On November 18, 2025, at USF in Tampa, members of the Muslim Students Association reported that the three individuals verbally harassed them and directed Islamophobic remarks at them [while the MSA members performed an outdoor prayer](#) at the Collins Boulevard Parking Facility. Students said the harassment disrupted their prayer and created fear for their safety. The USF Muslim Student Association issued a statement that read in part, “They got in our face, spit on the ground and harassed us and our sisters as well. They came with steel-toed boots and stomped near our heads while we were in prostration.” On the same day, a second incident took place in Hollywood, Florida, where another group of Muslim students reported being harassed while conducting a public prayer. Witnesses described hostile comments directed at the students because of their religious practice.

Matthew Freeman allegedly threatened pro-Palestinian, anti-genocide protesters with an axe as he drove through Harvard Square on August 10.

Massachusetts. Matthew Freeman allegedly threatened pro-Palestinian, anti-genocide protesters [with an axe as he drove through Harvard Square on August 10](#). The Middlesex District Attorney brought a hate crime and other charges against him. CAIR-MA represents Fawaz Abusharkh, who was allegedly struck by Freeman's car door when he opened it to menace protesters with his axe. Freeman was arraigned in Cambridge District Court on three counts: assault with a dangerous weapon (the axe); assault and battery with a dangerous weapon (the car door) on a person over 60; and a civil rights violation: using the threat of force to interfere with protected rights.

Illinois. [Danielle Wasserman received hate crimes charges for her violent attacks and defacement of a Palestinian-Mexican solidarity mural in Pilsen](#). In May, after throwing trash at the mural, Wasserman allegedly attacked a bystander who tried to

intervene, beating the person and attempting to strangle the victim with their own keffiyeh scarf. Then, in June, she returned to the site to vandalize the representation of a Palestinian farmer's painted face and added the words "THANK YOU ISRAEL <3 WOME," (sic) before striking another victim in the face with a metal three-hole punch and pinning them to the ground. [That victim sustained a large forehead lump visible weeks later at a CAIR-Chicago press conference](#). Wasserman was arrested by members of the Great Lakes Regional Fugitive Task Force; she is now facing criminal charges which include two counts of hate crime, two counts of aggravated battery in a public place, aggravated battery with strangulation, aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, and criminal damage over \$500.

New York. A Muslim woman was asked, "[are you Muslim?](#)" and then assaulted on an MTA subway train in Queens. The 55-year-old victim was commuting to work on the E train in the early morning when an individual approached her aggressively and demanded to know her religion. After confirming she was Muslim, the suspect allegedly began to beat her relentlessly, punching and kicking her until the train reached the next station. The woman suffered a concussion, a fractured nose, and extensive bruising. The suspect, 34-year-old Naved Durrni, was arrested and charged with hate crime assault. In 2021, [Durrni was charged with three random attacks on Muslims in Queens](#).

Connecticut. CAIR-Connecticut welcomed the filing of [hate crime charges against two men](#) who allegedly assaulted a man in Southington while using anti-Muslim slurs. According to reports, the men shouted comments about suicide vests and the September 11 attacks at the victim. When the victim responded with a sarcastic, self-deprecating remark, the men became angry and punched him. When a woman accompanying the victim attempted to intervene, one of the men punched her as well. Both assailants now face hate crime charges in connection with the assault.

California. On November 7, volunteers with Vigil for Gaza were peacefully displaying banners calling for justice in Palestine on a pedestrian bridge. A man approached them on foot while shouting racist slurs and profanities. As the confrontation escalated, the man allegedly used a knife to slash a bungee cord securing one of the flags. When volunteers attempted to de-escalate the situation, he reportedly pushed and struck them and then hit multiple volunteers with a flashlight. Volunteers called 911, and officers from the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety responded to the scene and arrested the alleged assailant. [Joshua Krupia was reportedly detained by protestors and then arrested and charged by police.](#) Several volunteers were left bloodied, and at least one required emergency medical treatment at a local hospital.

North Carolina. CAIR-NC and Charlotte activists urged the Mecklenburg County District Attorney to [reopen a hate crimes investigation](#) after police declined to charge a high school football player who allegedly attacked a Muslim student, despite never interviewing the victim. The victim's family said she had previously reported the assailant for bullying and making anti-Muslim remarks before he hospitalized her on March 7. School security footage, which has not been publicly released, allegedly shows the student chasing and assaulting her as she tries to flee. According to the family, the school suspended both students and characterized the assault as a "fight," a description the family disputes based on the video they viewed.

Connecticut. Two 7th grade twin [sisters who wear the hijab were allegedly physically assaulted by fellow students at Michael Wallace Middle School.](#) The attack resulted in injuries severe enough to require treatment at a hospital. The parents of the victims sought CAIR's assistance because they felt that they were not receiving sufficient communication from the school regarding disciplinary actions against the perpetrators or a clear plan to ensure their daughters' safety. In a press release, the Mayor the City of Waterbury wrote, "Investigators determined that the altercation was motivated by religion and/or ethnicity, meeting the legal definition of a hate crime."

Utah. CAIR welcomed [hate crime penalty enhancements to charges](#) brought against a Zachary Cole Holman in Utah who allegedly assaulted a Muslim woman. Holman was charged with attempted rape, a first-degree felony; forcible sexual abuse, a second-degree felony; and harassment. Each charge was filed with a hate crime penalty enhancement. A Muslim woman who wears a hijab told police that she was walking along the street with her friend while holding her child's hand when Holman allegedly threatened to sexually assault her. According to authorities: "Holman asked (the woman) why she was 'wearing those clothes' and then attempted to remove her hijab, an article of clothing (she) wears to observe her religious beliefs, numerous times. (The

woman) said Holman then grabbed her breasts over the clothes and took her to the ground, causing them to fall into oncoming traffic." Holman reportedly "placed his hands around the victim's neck and applied pressure to the point that the victim nearly lost consciousness."

New Jersey. Solomon David Silberberg and Moshe A. Glick [were each charged with aggravated assault, bias intimidation and weapons charges after they attacked a 42-year-old Muslim man](#) from Bergen County at an anti-genocide protest in mid-November in West Orange, New Jersey, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office told CAIR-New Jersey. The rally was in opposition to a real estate event held attempting to sell stolen land of Palestinians in Jerusalem.



Unveiling of Palestinian American artist Saj Issa's "Sabr at Fajr." (Patience at Dawn) Part of LA vs Hate's Signs of Solidarity campaign, the mural was unveiled shortly after Islamic Center of Southern California was targeted with hate graffiti. (Credit: CAIR-LA)

Hate Incident

New York. Jeremy Fistel was arrested in Texas by the US Marshals Service and the NYPD's Regional Fugitive Task Force for threatening phone calls made to then-candidate for New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani. According to Mamdani's campaign, at least four voicemails containing violent and Islamophobic language were left at his Queens office in the weeks leading up to the arrest. Among the threats, the caller said he would blow up Mamdani's car. He does not own a car. Fistel faced a "[22-count indictment](#)."

In a video, a man wearing an O'Reilly Auto Parts shirt with the name "Sean" on it can be heard yelling profanities at women, all of whom were wearing the hijab, in an In-N-Out Burger in La Habra. He accused them of being part of a Satanic cult, told them to "get out of [his] country," and falsely claimed that "Islam teaches hate."

California. In a video, a man wearing an O'Reilly Auto Parts shirt with the name "Sean" on it can be heard yelling profanities at women, all of whom were wearing the hijab, in an In-N-Out Burger in La Habra. He accused them of being part of a Satanic cult, told them to "get out of [his] country," and falsely claimed that "Islam teaches hate." CAIR-LA [praised the In-N-Out employee who reportedly refused to serve the man responsible for the harassment](#) and demanded that he leave the premises. The footage also shows the In-N-Out employee threatening to call the police if the man does not leave the area.

Georgia. Two young Muslim women were praying in a parking lot at the Avalon shopping center in Alpharetta when a middle-aged [Caucasian male reportedly began to stalk and harass them](#). The alleged perpetrator parked his car next to the woman and [began to hurl racist and anti-Muslim abuse](#), yelling, "go back to your country," "we don't want you worshipping out here," and "nobody wants your sh** here." He then questioned the American-born women about which countries they were from. A few days after the incident, Perry Greene, the ex-husband of U.S. Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, contacted the victims' attorney, CEO Lawyer Ali Awad, to identify himself as the man filmed in the video. He expressed his remorse for his actions and requested to meet with the victims to offer his apology. Greene met privately with the victims for over 30 minutes at Masjid

Jafar, attended the Friday sermon and prayer, and apologized in a public statement to the press. Greene also paid a \$75,000 settlement to Masjid Jafar, the local mosque attended by the three young Muslim women, concluding the civil suit. One of the Muslim women, Nesrine remarked, “I want to tell Mr. Greene that we accept his apology, and we hope he will continue to treat others with fairness, respect, equality and dignity.”

Illinois. An Afghan family in Skokie [reportedly received hateful, threatening notes referencing mass deportation](#). The notes read: “President Donald Trump deportation is coming. President Trump will deport all migrants. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 1-866-347-2423

- we will call.” Another stated: “Mass deportation - Yes, President Donald Trump deportation is coming for you!!! Finally - we will call.”

Florida. Palm Bay City Councilman Chandler Langevin [claimed that Muslims “do not belong” in the United States](#). On Jan. 15, Langevin echoed the rhetoric of Florida State Senator and U.S. Representative-elect Randy Fine—who has a history of anti-Muslim remarks—by replying to Fine’s post on X, stating: “... I have no issues saying that Islam exists for the sole purpose of conquering Christendom and ending the Jewish people as well, and they do not belong in this great nation.”

Connecticut. A man who reportedly objected to a mother’s headscarf



CAIR-GA's Azka Mahmood speaks at a press conference at the Georgia State Capitol in September 2025. (Credit: CAIR-GA)

(hijab) [harassed a Muslim family as they shopped for groceries in Bethel](#). He gave the mother the middle finger and told her to “go back where you came from.” As the family entered the store, he continued making obscene gestures and hateful remarks. He also targeted the family’s 10-year-old daughter, putting his middle finger in her face. The family reported the hate incident to police, but officers determined that “no hate crime (or any crime in general) had occurred.”

California. According to reports, on the first day of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, [vandals scrawled slurs](#) across the Berkeley Community Physical Therapy clinic windows, including “F– Islam.” This incident follows repeated defacements of the clinic’s pro-peace posters since the onset of the Israeli genocide in Gaza in 2023, underscoring an escalating climate of hate toward Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim.

Minnesota: CAIR-Minnesota called on law enforcement to investigate the [racist harassment of a Muslim mother and her five-year-old child in Rochester as a possible hate crime](#) and to ensure that family and bystanders were protected from retaliation. A video recorded at a local park showed a white woman admitting that she used a racist slur against the child, who is of Somali heritage. The woman reportedly called the five-year-old the N-word during the confrontation. Rochester police acknowledged the incident, stating they were gathering

information and actively reviewing the matter. Although Minnesota does not have a standalone hate crime statute, prosecutors may seek enhanced penalties for bias-motivated offenses. Police later submitted their investigative findings to the Rochester City Attorney’s Office for review and a charging decision. Reports also indicated that the woman seen using the slur began raising money online after the video circulated.

Incarceree Rights

Arkansas. In August, CAIR secured a [federal court order](#) requiring the Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC) to provide Muslims their own weekly prayer service, or Jummah. While Arkansas prisons allowed Christians, Catholics, Protestants and Jews to pray separately, they did not do the same for Muslims. ADC had previously required Muslims to pray alongside people of other faiths, including Five Percenters and adherents of the Nation of Islam. [CAIR and Professor Douglas Laycock filed the lawsuit in 2019](#) on behalf of three incarcerated Muslims, Gregory Holt, Wayde Stewart, and Rodney Martin, challenging ADC’s policy of requiring Muslims to pray with others who did not share their religion. The lawsuit challenged ADC’s policy under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), which requires jails and prisons to accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs of incarcerated individuals.

Oregon. CAIR Legal Defense Fund (CAIR LDF) [announced that through its legal advocacy, Muslim men incarcerated at an Oregon correctional institution celebrated Eid Al-Fitr on the proper date](#), according to moon sighting. The facility had previously celebrated Eid Al-Fitr on a predesignated day - often the “nearest Friday” to the actual date of celebration. During Ramadan, CAIR LDF stepped in and issued a demand letter to the facility, ordering that Muslim incarcerated have their religious rights properly accommodated. The team received confirmation from the facility that Muslims were able to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr on March 31. [Note: The name of the facility was not made public.]

New York. CAIR-NY, along with co-counsel Kaufman Lieb Lebowitz & Frick LLP, [filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of Tammi Green](#), a Muslim woman who was allegedly subjected to religious discrimination while in custody at the Orange County Jail. According to the complaint, Orange County officers repeatedly stripped off Green’s hijab in the presence of male officers. In one incident, officers ransacked Green’s cell in retaliation for her speaking out about poor jail conditions and destroyed her hijabs, leaving her unable to pray for 22 days. On multiple occasions, Green’s tasbeeh (prayer beads) and other religious items were also destroyed or confiscated. In addition, Green was repeatedly denied access to religious meals. During Ramadan, she went

several days without any food due to officer mismanagement. “I had to constantly defend my religion at the Orange County Jail. Regardless of incarceration status, I believed that all people deserved to be treated with respect and decency. I filed this lawsuit to get justice for myself and to make sure this never happens to anyone else,” Green said.

California. CAIR-LA and Asian Law Caucus (ALC) [filed a lawsuit](#) against the County of Orange, Orange County (OC) Sheriff Don Barnes, and individual deputies of the Orange County Sheriff’s Department (OCSD) for violations of religious freedom. On May 15, 2024, the plaintiffs, both Muslim women, engaged in lawful, constitutionally protected activity at a peaceful anti-genocide encampment near Rowland Hall at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). Despite the demonstration’s largely peaceful and nonviolent nature, [UCI summoned dozens of law enforcement agencies, including OCSD, to forcefully disband the demonstration](#). The officers and deputies quickly and aggressively advanced towards the student encampment, ultimately arresting dozens of students, activists, and community members, including both women. While in the OCSD’s custody, the women were subjected to the unlawful removal of their hijabs, including being forced to submit to booking photographs without their headscarves. This conduct amounts to a serious violation of the sincerely held religious beliefs of both women

and their rights under both state and federal law. Orange County has a previous history of violating the rights of Muslim women in its custody; in 2007, a [Muslim woman sued the county for violating her religious freedom](#) when deputies forced her to remove her hijab while in a courthouse holding facility.

Muhammad Zahid Chaudhry, a green card holder who was injured while on active duty service in the U.S. Army, was taken into ICE detention on August 21 at a citizenship interview at the USCIS office in Tukwila.

Immigration/Asylum Discrimination

Washington. Muhammad Zahid Chaudhry, [a green card holder who was injured while on active duty](#) service in the U.S. Army, was taken into ICE detention on August 21 at a citizenship interview at the USCIS office in Tukwila. Zahid, who uses a wheelchair, is an immigrant originally from Pakistan who has lived in the U.S. for 25 years. He is a member of the Olympia chapter of Veterans for Peace. Zahid's wife said her husband also works with veteran mental health groups.

North Carolina. [Libyan asylum-seeker Mohamed Ali Aboubaker Naser](#) was taken into custody by ICE agents who reportedly misidentified him as an Iranian citizen. According to eyewitness accounts and his attorney, three men in plain clothes arrived at Naser's home on the morning of July 15, making demands of his family to turn him over to the authorities. Naser was at work at that time. The agents waited and returned two hours later wearing tactical vests marked "POLICE" but displayed no badges or warrant. The agents allegedly threatened his family with pepper spray during a 90-minute standoff before leaving. The next day, ICE agents abducted Naser on his way to work. During an ICE interrogation session, agents questioned him extensively about Iran, the Iran/Israel conflict, Iranian geo-politics at large, and the Iranian community in the United States - despite his

having no citizenship or familial ties to that country. Naser was reportedly transferred to Georgia's Stewart Detention Center, a private prison known for abuses of prisoners. Naser entered the United States legally on a visitor visa and filed for asylum; his case remains pending. He has no criminal record other than three dismissed traffic infractions from 2016. Three of his five children are U.S. citizens.

Texas. Ward Sakeik, who arrived lawfully in the U.S. at age eight, was detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection in February 2025 [after returning from honeymooning](#) in the U.S. Virgin Islands. During her months-long detention, Sakeik's whereabouts were often unknown. Sakeik is a stateless Palestinian woman who

has lived in the United States since childhood. She had a pending green-card application, a lawful marriage to a U.S. citizen, and a spotless compliance record spanning 15 years. [Despite this record and a federal judge's order barring her removal](#), ICE attempted to deport her but refused to disclose the destination country. Sakeik was released in July and returned to her life in Texas. Speaking about [the experience after being freed](#), Sakeik said, "I was handcuffed for 16 hours without any water or food on the bus. I was moved around like cattle."

Texas. CAIR-Houston and immigration attorney Dalia Moftah demanded the immediate release of Mohamed Abushanab, [a Palestinian man who had been held in ICE detention for](#)



CAIR-Georgia and Georgia Muslim Voter Project (CAMVP) hosted Muslim Advocacy Day at the Georgia State Capitol. CAIR offices across the nation hold such events to ensure legislators hear directly from their constituents. (Credit: CAIR-GA)

[more than ten months despite an immigration judge granting him protection from deportation.](#) The judge found that Abushanab faced a clear probability of persecution if returned to Israel and also granted him protection under the Convention Against Torture. Under federal law, ICE is required to release individuals granted such relief when no safe third country is available. Abushanab, originally from Tulkarem, had fled conditions of repeated Israeli military detentions, checkpoints, and strip searches. After securing a visa to Spain, he later sought asylum at the southern border of the U.S. Although the immigration judge issued a final ruling in his favor, ICE continued to detain him and claimed incorrectly that a removal order from the Board of Immigration Appeals superseded the judge's decision. DHS later attempted to amend the order to designate Jordan as a country of removal, despite Abushanab having no legal or cultural ties there. The immigration judge denied that request.

Ohio. In July, CAIR-Ohio called for the immediate release of Imam Ayman Soliman, a widely respected Muslim chaplain who worked at Cincinnati Children's Hospital and who served as imam of the Clifton Mosque, [after he was detained by ICE during a routine check-in.](#) Imam Soliman immigrated from Egypt more than a decade ago and was granted asylum based on credible fears of political persecution. He has no criminal record and has lived lawfully in the United States for years

under protected status. In December 2024, his asylum was suddenly revoked without clear explanation or due process. On the morning of his next scheduled check-in, ICE detained him without warning. His detention sparked widespread concern in Cincinnati, where Imam Soliman is known for his compassionate service as the hospital's first Islamic chaplain, providing spiritual support to patients and families during medical crises. Advocates warned that deporting him to Egypt would expose him to persecution, imprisonment, or worse, given his history of political activism. In August, advocates delivered a [letter](#) signed by more than 1,100 Ohioans, including clergy and faith leaders from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other traditions, calling on Governor Mike DeWine to intervene in the proceeding before a scheduled hearing on Tuesday, August 26, in Cleveland. Advocates warned that deportation would place him in imminent danger if returned to Egypt, amounting to what faith leaders have called a "death sentence."

Texas. Muhanad J. M. Alshrouf, a 22-year-old Palestinian man, was confined for nine days in a secondary screening room at George Bush Intercontinental Airport despite entering the United States legally on a valid immigrant visa. [Alshrouf arrived in Houston on July 5 after completing a years-long immigration process and receiving full approval for a U.S. immigrant visa. He had no criminal record, had never been arrested, and had passed extensive](#)

[background checks by both U.S. and Israeli authorities](#). His sole purpose in immigrating was to reunite with his U.S. citizen father and siblings and begin building a future in the United States. Instead, he was held in an airport secondary screening room without access to legal counsel, clean clothes, proper food, or basic hygiene. According to his family, he remained in the same clothes for more than a week and received little communication about the reason for his detention. CAIR-Houston worked with elected officials and legal partners to push for Alshrouf's release and ensure his rights were protected.

New Jersey. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit [confirmed that the federal government cannot revoke the green card of Imam Mohammed Qatanani](#), a prominent religious leader whose immigration battle has lasted more than twenty years. Mohammed Qatanani, a well-known and long-time imam at the Islamic Center of Passaic County in Paterson, has been residing in the U.S. since 1996. He was born in Palestine and applied for a green card in 1996 after arriving in the U.S. on a work visa. The U.S. government tried to deport him after it missed the deadline to appeal his legal status. On July 15, the Third Circuit ruled that the Justice Department had exceeded its authority in attempting to revisit and revoke his permanent residency. "To permit an agency to expand its power in the face of a congressional limitation on its jurisdiction would be to grant to the agency power to override Congress,"

Judge Arianna J. Freeman wrote in the court's opinion. The ruling affirmed that the government cannot use administrative maneuvering to undo a long-finalized immigration decision.

Law Enforcement Encounters

New York. Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP (ECBAWM) filed a [federal civil rights](#) lawsuit [against](#) the City of New York and individual New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers on behalf of CAIR-NY, as well as Zarmeen Azam and Shajnin Howlader, [two individuals who were brutally assaulted, including being strangled, and had their hijabs forcefully removed by NYPD officers while peacefully protesting](#). Zarmeen Azam said the following while describing her experience, "Wearing my hijab is an act of faith, identity, and dignity. The NYPD ripped it off me as if none of that mattered. In that moment, I felt not only stripped of my dignity but also my safety and my honor. I was left with bruises, aching for over a week, and emotionally shattered, a pain that lasted for months. I've never felt so vulnerable and so humiliated in my entire life."

Michigan. CAIR-MI filed a [civil rights complaint with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights](#), U.S. Department of Justice Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, and the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, against the Wayne State University Police Department (WSU

PD) for engaging in a documented pattern of racial and religious profiling, harassment, and the unconstitutional exclusion of Muslim, Arab, and pro-Palestinian, anti-genocide students on campus. The complaint alleges that WSU PD officers unlawfully used force against peaceful student protesters, demanded immigration documents from students without legal authority, and repeatedly denied Arab and Muslim students access to public university spaces and events—often without cause or legal justification. It further asserts that these discriminatory actions were neither isolated nor accidental but constitute an official pattern and practice reflective of a broader institutional failure at Wayne State University. The

complaint is supported by numerous first-hand student narratives, video documentation, public statements by Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy, and correspondence from prior incidents involving WSU PD. It details discriminatory conduct spanning from late 2023 through April 2025, including the suppression of peaceful protest, retaliatory ID checks, and threats made by officers toward students wearing religious or cultural attire.

California. CAIR-CA, together with a coalition of civil rights attorneys and leading personal injury firms, filed a lawsuit against the University of California Regents, the California Highway Patrol (CHP), the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD),



Freedom includes the right to be different—individually. It is not freedom if people are compelled to conform to someone else's vision of what Americans must look like, say, or believe. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

the UCLA Police Department, and several individuals accused of [perpetrating violence against pro-Palestinian activists during last spring's anti-genocide encampment](#). The lawsuit seeks accountability from both the attackers and law enforcement agencies, alleging failure to protect pro-Palestinian activists, unconstitutional use of force, and violations of the rights of students and community members engaged in peaceful protest. The lawsuit represents over 30 students, faculty, and community members who were targeted during the attacks. According to the complaint, a group of pro-Israel extremists entered the UCLA campus late on April 30, 2024, and violently assaulted peaceful protesters for hours. The attackers shot fireworks directly at students, used chemical agents, and struck people with metal rods, poles, boards, and other weapons. They attempted to tear down the encampment while engaging in intimidation and psychological harassment. Witnesses reported that UCLA police and private security officers stood by without intervening. Beginning on May 1 and continuing into the early hours of May 2, law enforcement officers in full tactical gear entered the encampment and dismantled tents and barricades. Officers reportedly fired rubber bullets and deployed flashbang grenades, resulting in multiple injuries among protesters. CAIR-LA documented and received reports of several serious injuries caused by the police operation.

Other Discrimination

Michigan. CAIR-MI [filed a civil rights complaint with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights \(MDCR\)](#) on behalf of two Muslim women and their minor children after they experienced apparent food tampering and Islamophobic harassment at a Domino's Pizza in Waterford. According to the MDCR complaint, a store employee made racist and anti-Muslim remarks about the visibly Muslim family in front of another customer. The employee allegedly contaminated both pizzas with pork—despite clear requests for no pork—and one pizza also contained a hair embedded in the cheese. The family later learned from a bystander that the derogatory comments had been directed at them. The family reported the incident to store management, Domino's corporate office, and the Waterford Township Police Department. Before filing the MDCR complaint, CAIR-MI contacted the location and the corporate office but received no meaningful response. Police later informed CAIR-MI that their investigation was complete and that they had submitted a request for criminal charges to the county prosecutor's office.

CAIR welcomed an investigation by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) into a dehumanizing and Islamophobic poster reportedly hung in the administrative wing of TSA operations in Maui, Hawaii. A laminated sign taped to the office door of a TSA employee read, “SUICIDE BOMBER FREE ZONE. Absolutely no killing yourself for Allah beyond this point.”

Other Government Discrimination

Hawaii. [CAIR welcomed an investigation by the Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) into a dehumanizing and Islamophobic poster reportedly hung in the administrative wing of TSA operations in Maui, Hawaii. A laminated sign taped to the office door of a TSA

employee read, “SUICIDE BOMBER FREE ZONE. Absolutely no killing yourself for Allah beyond this point.” Above the message was the image of a stick figure with a ticking time bomb strapped to its body. The sign remained on the employee’s door for months, allegedly in view of local TSA management.

Tennessee. CAIR welcomed the dismissal of an assistant prosecutor in Knox County after local media uncovered social media posts in which [he allegedly expressed racist, anti-immigrant, sexist, neo-Nazi, and anti-Muslim views](#). The Knox County District Attorney’s Office fired the prosecutor on May 5, shortly after Knox News notified the office of his active X (Twitter) account. According to reporting, the account included posts that praised Nazism and repeatedly belittled and disparaged Black people and immigrants.

New Jersey. CAIR-NJ condemned anti-Muslim social media posts reportedly made by Justin Goldsman, a public figure who held several key positions, including serving as the chief of staff for a New Jersey state legislator. In a post made publicly on what appears to be his Facebook account, Goldsman wrote, “we are humans not Muslims” with a heart emoji. That post also included a link to a post made on X by another user that has since been deleted. In September 2024, Goldsman made another anti-Muslim post on his X account perpetuating an Islamophobic

trope. He writes: “Can’t sleep with 72 fake imaginary virgins with a blown off terrorist d-k can you?” Goldsman stepped down as the chair of the Democratic Jewish Caucus and soon departed his role as chief of staff for Assemblyman Gary Schaer.

Ohio. Columbus Community Shelter Board employee Thaddeus Billman allegedly called Muslims “crackhead clown individuals” and expressed support for Islamophobe Robert Spencer on his YouTube channel. He was [dismissed from his position](#). CAIR-OH had [previously called for the dismissal of the employee after the YouTube channel came to light](#).

Ohio. Youngstown Council President Anita Davis apologized for a [racist](#).

[anti-Arab social media post](#). In that post congratulating a police officer on his retirement, Davis said, “We all thought he was an Arab terrorist.”

Texas. The associate dean of academics at the Defense Language Institute’s English Language Center in San Antonio stepped down after alleged social media posts [calling for the killing of Muslim protesters in Britain and expressing racist sentiments toward Native Americans](#) surfaced. The post was in response to a protest in Boston in which four police officers were reported injured and 13 demonstrators were arrested. Other posts alleged to be from the Air Force official urge authorities to deal harshly with pro-Palestinian protesters.



CAIR Georgia’s Muslim Youth Training Institute empowers young Muslims with essential skills in civic engagement, public speaking, community organizing, and strategic storytelling. (Credit: CAIR-GA)

Watchlist/Travel

Oklahoma. In August, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit [allowed CAIR's lawsuit on behalf of Saadiq Long to move forward](#). Long has faced more than ten years of harassment and discrimination since the government placed him on the No-Fly List and its related Watchlist. Although the government removed him from the No-Fly List in 2019, he remains on the Watchlist and continues to experience serious harm. The Fourth Circuit ruled that the government may have violated Long's constitutional rights when the Transportation Security Administration used the Watchlist to deny him two commercial licenses needed for his job as a truck driver: the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) and the Hazardous Material Endorsement (HME). The court also allowed Long's claim against the No-Fly List to continue. Even though he is no longer on the list, the government did not give him adequate assurance that it would not place him on it again in the future. The ruling builds on CAIR Legal Defense Fund's victory at the U.S. Supreme Court in 2024, which established the precedent allowing Long's No Fly List challenge to proceed. [Note: The ruling was in Virginia. Long lives in Oklahoma.]

Zoning Discrimination

Michigan. CAIR-MI [filed a counter-complaint](#) in Washtenaw County Circuit Court on behalf of Ypsilanti

Township property owner Abdulghani Saleh, alleging that township officials engaged in discriminatory and selective code enforcement against him because of his religion, ethnicity, and perceived association with a local mosque. According to the filing, Community Compliance Director Belinda Kingsley and other township officials repeatedly obstructed Saleh's attempts to resolve zoning matters. The complaint states that officials refused to meet with Saleh or his representatives, issued notices to incorrect addresses, and hindered access to required site-planning processes. It also alleges that officials made statements reflecting anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bias. The counter-complaint brings claims for Abuse of Process, violations of the Equal Protection Clause, and Unlawful Takings under both the U.S. and Michigan Constitutions. It further asserts that Ypsilanti Township has previously used zoning and code enforcement to target the Islamic Association of Ypsilanti, issuing citations for conditions identical to those on neighboring non-Muslim-owned properties where no enforcement occurred. CAIR-MI sought a court order preventing further discriminatory enforcement, compensatory and punitive damages, and the removal of township directives that obstructed Saleh's access to the same zoning and permitting processes available to other property owners.

Recommendations

Make a choice. Then act. In 2024, many Americans--Democrat, Republican, and Independent--voted to say that American democracy was not solving their problems. The events documented in this report suggest 2026 will ask Americans questions about those solutions:

1. Do Americans think freedom means the right to be different, or the right to be part of a uniform society?
2. Did Americans vote for equal treatment under the law or for political revenge pogroms directed by a tyrannical, unbalanced executive?
3. Do Americans think a government composed of three equal branches that can check and balance one another or one with an unhinged, unchecked President is best equipped to solve problems?

Sharia, in its essence, requires Muslims to be a benefit to humanity and to avert harm from humanity. As America's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, our institution's answers value the right to be different, equal treatment under the law, and three equal branches of government as the best options for solving American problems and projecting confidence in American values to the world.

Litigate. Empower States. Protect People. In 2025, government entities often justified their actions with politically charged language, making big moves via executive action, memos, and interim policies rather than through democratic lawmaking and consensus. Those seeking to make America work for everyone are challenged to muster lawsuits, injunctions, and political backlash before the administration reshapes facts on the ground.

This report also shows that this is not the full story of 2025:

1. Courts matter. This included lower federal courts and state courts. The judiciary often remains as the last bulwark against massive overreach by imbalance branches of government, and trust in the court system remains despite ongoing challenges.
2. States, cities, and civil society still have real power. All powers not specifically placed with the federal government in the Constitution are reserved to the states or to the people. This means states can refuse to cooperate with federal overreach and can use protective local laws, public education, and litigation to protect their constituents.
3. Public opinion and coalition work made some policies too costly to sustain or expand. When

proponents of harmful policy find themselves facing a strong, united front, public pressure can dismantle even deeply entrenched positions.

In light of this, for 2026, American Muslims and those who value an American democracy that works for everyone should:

1. Give courts and state actors better ammunition, showing reasonable, safer alternatives to cruel and dangerous policy.
2. Give the public a clear contrast between approaches to policy issues: “Their approach is cruel and lawless; ours is effective and fair.”
3. Protect people on the ground right now as much as possible through the power of a united community.

If you are not a citizen, this is the time to let your U.S. citizen colleagues step to the forefront. This advice applies particularly to students here on a visa. The government is not simply cancelling visas; law enforcement officers are physically going to campuses looking for people. In several cases, the person has been whisked away with their whereabouts being unknown for a period of time. The Laken Riley Act can result in your being potentially subject to mandatory detention and deportation if you are arrested. It does not require a conviction in and of itself: simply

having been arrested for certain crimes is enough to trigger the Act’s provisions. President Trump’s executive orders also directed federal law enforcement to investigate immigrants already legally present in the United States based on their activism and ideological views. This directive raises serious concerns about potential political targeting, surveillance, and visa revocations for those engaged in activism or political dissent.

If you are a citizen, this is your moment to act. Your community needs you to speak up against the encroachments on our civil liberties that threaten not just American Muslims, but vulnerable people across the globe. Now is a time to consider the spheres of privilege in which you reside and to think about the historical examples of courage and leadership that the Muslim community holds dear. Your voice as an American is crucial in the fight for our future.

CAIR’s Vision Regarding Islamophobia in America

“Our vision looks toward the time when Muslims in America are granted equal access to social opportunities and equal protection under the law. Unhindered by Islamophobia, Muslims are afforded equal opportunities to pursue their dreams and potential.”

Background, Sources and Methodology, Limitations

This report assesses the following research question: What are the main trends, advances, and challenges American Muslims faced regarding equal access to social opportunities and equal protection in the year under review? If a Muslim, or someone perceived to be Muslim, faces illegal discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, viewpoints, or other characteristics associated with being Muslim, then CAIR asserts that their civil rights have been violated because of Islamophobia.

Background

From 1996 to 2009, CAIR published an annual report on the status of civil rights for Muslims in the United States. After a brief hiatus, the annual report was relaunched, covering incidents in the years of 2014 through 2017. No reports covering 2018 and 2019 incidents were published. To accommodate pandemic needs and staff changes, CAIR reduced the variety of data on which the report draws and began publishing reports covering incidents occurring in 2020 through 2025, the year covered in this present report.

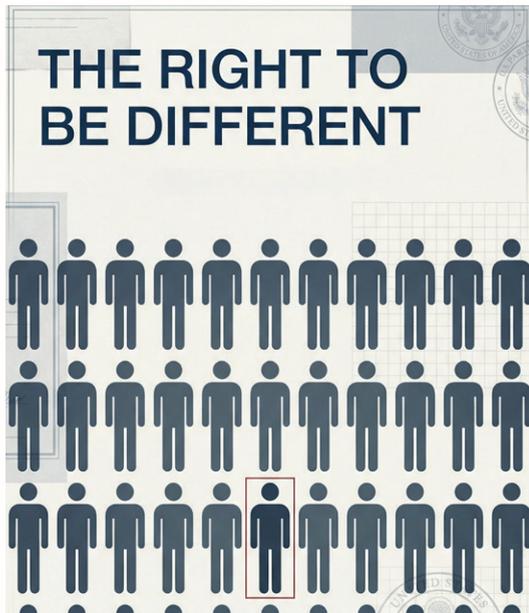


The Maryland office of CAIR successfully concludes 10th annual Muslim Youth Leadership Symposium (MYLS) Source: CAIR-National. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

Sources and Methodology

Each year, thousands of Americans contact CAIR through a variety of media, including telephone, email, and our online complaint system. When possible, CAIR staff may also reach out to offer their services to individuals whose incidents were reported in news sources and not directly to CAIR.

With each complaint, case intake staff review preliminary materials and conduct interviews with prospective clients as part of the confidential intake process. These nationwide intake staff will then classify the case using the complaint category definitions provided earlier in this report. Each CAIR office that does intakes then submits their annual totals to the research and advocacy team.



The research and advocacy team made several changes to the typing sheets all intake staff are guided by:

1. Added guidance on incident time frames.

a. NOTE: An incoming incident is “an occurrence of an action or situation that is a separate unit of experience” that has been reported to CAIR. A separate unit can include a group of people. As a rule of thumb, if two or more hours pass and another encounter occurs this becomes a separate unit, thus a separate incoming incident.

- i. Example (one incident): At a wedding party, 10 people are verbally abused by a man.
- ii. Example (still one incident): Forty-five minutes later the same man returns to the wedding party and verbally abuses all fifty guests and wait staff.
- iii. Example (now two incidents): The next morning the same man verbally abuses 15 guests as they say goodbye to each other.
- iv. Example (now three incidents): Two days later, the same man grabs a Muslim walking down the street in the same city and verbally abuses him.

2. Split Bullying in Bullying (K-12) and Bullying (Higher Education) to give better insight into where the incidents were occurring.
3. Split Education Discrimination in Education Discrimination (K-12) and Education Discrimination (higher Education) to give better insight into where the incidents were occurring.
4. Split Hate Crimes and Incidents into Hate Crime and Hate Incident to give better insight into where staff identified incidents of bias that included a probable criminal violation.
5. Created a specific Immigration/Asylum Discrimination category as some CAIR offices have started processing routine immigration and asylum legal work since the report was created.
6. Added Zoning Discrimination. CAIR's Islamic Place of Worship Incident Dataset is built using only incidents that have public reporting. Because of attorney-client privilege CAIR sometimes does not have a client's permission to make any public statements about cases we know occurred.

CAIR's research and advocacy department staff reviewed approximately 1,897 statements, action alerts, community advisories, and

videos issued by the organization in 2025. From this information we drew many of the case studies and key developments and trends impacting Muslim civil rights in 2025. Our staff check these cases for updates with those involved or through media sources.

Note on Language: Anti-Palestinian Racism

While anti-Arab racism is certainly not synonymous with Islamophobia, Muslim and Arab identities have long been conflated, particularly by those who seek to villainize both, making anti-Muslim hate part and parcel of anti-Arab, and specifically, anti-Palestinian racism. Anti-Palestinian racism has been defined as ["a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives."](#)

Anti-Muslim rhetoric is used to justify anti-Palestinian racism, and anti-Palestinian racism is also weaponized against those who are presumed to be Palestinian, including Muslims. In instances of this report, we therefore analyze how the use of anti-Muslim, as well as anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab rhetoric, deeply impacts the lives of American Muslims.

Limitations

This report contains a mere snapshot of the experiences of American Muslims, including children, youth, and families, across the United States.

CAIR knows that bias incidents targeting the community are vastly underreported to both law enforcement and community institutions. In part, this is a reflection of decades of abuse by a number of law enforcement agencies.

Desensitization plays a role in non-reporting as well. CAIR staff often hear of episodes in which individuals are harassed and do not report the incident because the target feels that either nothing can be done, or that such treatment is expected and normal and does not necessitate an official complaint.

Where CAIR is present, the local community is more likely to report cases to the organization. Thus, in states like California and Ohio where CAIR has multiple offices, higher numbers of cases are expected than in states like South Carolina or Montana where the organization does not yet have an office.

Finally, over the course of 2022, CAIR's civil rights team began the process of adopting a new proprietary case management system. As part of that process, they also updated the complaint category definitions. As a result, in many instances we cannot make 1-1 comparisons between our case types in 2021 and 2023.



CAIR successfully concludes Leadership & Policy Conference. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

Complaint Categories

CAIR staff nationwide use the following definitions to categorize the incidents that are being reported to them. The types and definitions were updated in early 2025.¹² Previous to that, they were last changed in 2022.

Airline Discrimination: Discrimination faced by travelers and passengers that is not initiated by government agencies. Examples include removal from flights due to speaking a non-English language or wearing religious attire. Cases involving airline employees experiencing discrimination while performing their work duties are categorized under Employment Discrimination.

Banking Discrimination: Discriminatory actions by financial institutions based on perceived identity, such as religion, race, or ethnicity. This includes sudden closures of bank accounts, denial of services, or issues with peer-to-peer payment apps (e.g., Venmo, CashApp, Zelle) and money transfer services (e.g., Western Union).

Bullying (K-12): Persistent abusive behavior in K-12 settings such as physical aggression, harmful teasing, online harassment, and intimidation. Systemic discrimination, such as Islamophobic policies and/or curriculum, is categorized under Education Discrimination (K-12).

Bullying (Higher Education): Persistent abusive behavior at a public or private institution of higher education such as physical aggression, harmful teasing, online harassment, and intimidation. Systemic discrimination, such as Islamophobic policies and/or curriculum, are categorized under Education Discrimination (Higher Education).

Denial of Service: Discrimination by a place of business open to the public, such as restaurants or stores; denying access or service due to religious attire or other perceived identities.

Education Discrimination (K-12): Institutional discrimination in K-12 education, including Islamophobic curriculum or materials, policies, and denial of religious accommodations (e.g., prayer space, Islamic holidays). Non-systemic abusive behavior by staff is categorized under Bullying (K-12).

Education Discrimination (Higher Education): Institutional discrimination in higher education such as Islamophobic curriculum or materials, policies, or denials of religious accommodations (e.g., prayer space, Islamic holidays). Non-systemic abusive behavior by staff is categorized under Bullying (Higher Education).

Employment Discrimination: Workplace discrimination based on protected characteristics, such as race, color, religion, or national origin. This includes denial of religious

accommodations (e.g., prayer), hostile work environments, or unfair terminations.

Family Law Discrimination:

Discriminatory treatment in family law cases, such as bias in custody or divorce proceedings based on race, religion or ethnicity.

FBI Interrogation: Attempts by FBI agents to interview individuals, often at their workplace, school, or home.

Free Speech/First Amendment:

Violations of free speech or religious expression by government entities. Examples include interference with BDS advocacy or restrictions on public religious expression.

Hate Crime: Crime targeting individuals based on religion, race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics (e.g. physical assault of an individual, such as in a parking lot or protest; damage or destruction targeting an individual's home). Bias incidents that do not rise to the level of a crime are categorized Hate Incident.

Hate Incident: Bias incident targeting individuals based on religion, race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics that does not rise to the level of a crime (e.g., verbal harassment such as being called a "terrorist"). Bias incidents that fit more directly under another category should be marked under that category first. For example, incidents contributing

to a hostile work environment are categorized Employment Discrimination and abusive behavior occurring at education institutions are categorized under Bullying (K-12) or Bullying (Higher Education).

Healthcare Discrimination:

Discrimination in healthcare settings based on perceived identity such as religion, race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics. Examples include denial of treatment, inappropriate assumptions about a patient's health based on perceived identity, proselytizing the patient, or refusing to provide care in a patient's preferred language.

Housing Discrimination:

Discrimination in housing access, including refusal to rent or sell property, evictions, or habitability issues based on perceived identity such as religion, race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics.

Incarceration Rights: Violations of incarcerated individuals' rights to religious practice or religious property (e.g., denial of halal/kosher meals, denial of participation in daily or Friday prayers, refusal to provide religious materials like a Quran or prayer rug, prohibiting religious clothing such as hijabs or kufis).

Immigration/Asylum Discrimination:

Discriminatory treatment in immigration or asylum cases, including delays or suspicion based on perceived ties to terrorism.

Law Enforcement Encounter:

Use of excessive force or improper questioning by law enforcement, not including incidents that are categorized as FBI Interrogation or Incarceree Rights.

Other Discrimination: Discriminatory incidents not covered by other categories, perpetrated by non-government entities.

Other Government Discrimination: Discriminatory actions by government entities not classified under other categories.

Other – Standard Immigration/Asylum Services: Standard services provided in support of immigration and/or asylum cases. Discriminatory treatment in immigration or asylum cases should be categorized as Immigration/Asylum Discrimination.

Out of Scope: Anything outside the parameters of our work and mission.

Sports Discrimination: Discrimination in organized sports, such as failure to accommodate reasonable religious requests (e.g., wearing a hijab, allowing players to hydrate at sunset during Ramadan) or use of slurs.



CAIR-NJ Joins a Member of Congress in Response to Israel Breaking Gaza Ceasefire. (Credit: Omar Al-Saray)

Watchlist/Travel: Issues related to placement on the U.S. government's terrorist watchlist. This can include excessive airport screening, interrogations by CBP or the FBI, or denial of boarding. Discriminatory treatment by airline employees is categorized under Airline Discrimination.

Zoning Discrimination: Discriminatory zoning practices targeting Islamic institutions. Examples include blocking mosque construction or targeted, excessive and unfair enforcement of zoning regulations for already established Islamic institutions.

Appendix 1: 2025 Islamic Place of Worship Incidents

Month	Name of Center or Mosque	City	State	Mosque Incident Type	Details
Jan.	Masjid Al-Baqi	Bethpage	NY	Zoning	RLUIPA lawsuit cited unfavorable treatment in parking provisions, also the city hired a self-described Islamophobe. DOJ filed a statement of interest supporting Muslims on Long Island, the plaintiff.
Jan.	Not Named in Sources	Nashville	TN	Intimidation	A Tennessee teenager was charged for plotting a mass shooting targeting a Nashville-area mosque. The teen apparently hated "Black, Jewish, and Muslim Americans."
Feb.	Masjid Nur Al-Islam	Kensington	NY	Harassment	A man in a ski mask and MAGA hat shouted "vile Islamophobic obscenities" outside a Brooklyn mosque.
March	[South Valley Islamic Community Center Ramadan Taraweeh facility]	Morgan Hill	CA	Harassment	Following Taraweeh, an assailant reportedly shouted, "Are you Palestinian?! Are you Hamas?!" before pushing an elderly man. The attacker then turned to his daughter, yelling "You people!" and "I love Israel!" while continuing to verbally harass them. The worshippers were part of the South Valley Islamic Community Center congregation which was using the Morgan Hill Community Center to accommodate large Ramadan crowd. The man faced hate crimes charges for the incident.
March	Islamic Center of Pflugerville	Pflugerville	TX	Harassment	Islamophobic hate group RAIR alleged that a planned expansion of the facility represented an effort to "create a self-sufficient enclave which holds views anathema to American values."
March	East Plano Islamic Center (EPIC)	East Plano	TX	Intimidation	As part of Texas Gov. Abbott's anti-Muslim campaign, the Texas Funeral Services Commission (TFSC) initially claimed it had "determined" EPIC has committed violations. Months later TFSC wrote EPIC saying "If TFSC received credible information..." No charges were filed. Reporting uncovered that a TFSC official shared anti-Muslim content, Abbott launched no investigation into that potential civil rights violation.

Month	Name of Center or Mosque	City	State	Mosque Incident Type	Details
April	New York University Muslim prayer room in campus library	New York	NY	DDV	Someone drew a lewd image on the room's wall and there was urine on the prayer mats.
May	Islamic Center of Southern California (ICSC)	Los Angeles	CA	DDV	Vandals defaced ICSC property. The LAPD described the graffiti as "potentially hate-motivated symbols" and launched a hate crimes investigation.
May	Austin Diyanet Center	Austin	TX	DDV	A person covered their face and used spray-paint to vandalize the facility . Surveillance videos indicated the person targeted three mosques in one night.
May	Islamic Ahlul Bayt Association	Austin	TX	DDV	A person covered their face and used spray-paint to vandalize the facility . Surveillance videos indicated the person targeted three mosques in one night.
May	Nueces Mosque	Austin	TX	DDV	A person covered their face and used spray-paint to vandalize the facility . Surveillance videos indicated the person targeted three mosques in one night.
June	Masjid Al Noor	Salt Lake City	UT	Harassment	A white male suspect approached the front entrance of the mosque, attached an Israeli and an American flag to the front entrance , and returned multiple times to further attach it to the house of worship. The Salt Lake City Police Department (SLCPD) and the FBI were reportedly able to identify a suspect and interview him.
June	Islamic Center of Bothell	Bothell	WA	Intimidation	At 9:21 pm on Sunday, June 8, the Center received an anonymous website contact form submission titled "Blow up the mosque" with detailed and specific threats enclosed, as well as hateful Islamophobic language. (Screenshots)

Month	Name of Center or Mosque	City	State	Mosque Incident Type	Details
Aug.	Islamic Cultural Center of New York (ICCNy)	Stamford	CT	Harassment	Michael Slocum allegedly shouted a series of Islamophobic insults at families exiting the mosque, including insults attacking Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. The man also reportedly shouted: "Get the f**k out of here. Fifty-six Muslim countries in the world. Go pick one. Why do you come to a Catholic country? United States is a Christian country." The Stamford Police Department charged Slocum with Breach of Peace in the Second Degree, a Class B misdemeanor.
Sept.	Masjid Bilal Rabah Mosque	Maricopa	AZ	Intimidation	Mark Antonio Martinez pled guilty to charges after the Maricopa Police Department released 13 minutes of alleged threats recorded by Mosque staff on August 3. Martinez, reportedly said, "We're gonna have to crusade all you guys again," and claimed he would be "one of the attackers." Martinez was sentenced to two years of unsupervised probation, 30 hours of community service, counseling and a fine.
Sept.	Islamic Institute of America Mosque	Dearborn Heights	IL	Intimidation	Kenneth Gehrke was arrested reportedly for sending a threatening message to the mosque.
Sept.	Islamic Organization of North American (IONA)	Warren	MI	DDV	Vandalism included wall damage, broken windows, and graffiti on the floor and on construction equipment.
Sept.	Unspecified Mosque	Dearborn	MI	Intimidation	A Virginia man faced " charges for threatening the public, making threats online, soliciting terrorism and conspiring to commit an act of terrorism" including saying he would target a Dearborn, MI mosque with an AR-15.
Sept.	Islamic Center of Greater Chattanooga (ISGC)	Chattanooga	TN	Intimidation	Robert Miller allegedly called the center and said, "I'm going to kill all of you, Hail Satan."
Sept.	Masjid Muhammad	Chattanooga	TN	Harassment	Police charged Daniel Lyrock with false reports, disorderly conduct and public intoxication after he called a local bar and said an Islamic center located near the property was going to blow it up.

Month	Name of Center or Mosque	City	State	Mosque Incident Type	Details
Sept.	Sufaraa Center	McKinney	TX	Harassment	A man reportedly entered the Center without permission , began questioning people and reportedly stated, "There should be no mosques in the USA."
Oct.	Islamic Society of Western Maryland (ISWMD)	Hagerstown	MD	Harassment	In response to a Facebook post about the mosque's planned interfaith open house Washington County School Board of Education Vice President Mike Guessford's commented, "We need to protest." Guessford later apologized to the community.
Oct.	Islamic Institute of America in Dearborn Heights	Dearborn	MI	Intimidation	Over several days a man called the mosque and left threatening messages, including saying " I'm going to burn it down. "
Oct.	Noor Islamic Cultural Center	Dublin	OH	Harassment	Video of a khutbah was clipped. The organization clipping the sermon engaged in "reckless misrepresentation" of Arabic phrases . Relying on this clip, a local organization accused the mosque of "calling for the extermination" of another group.
Nov.	Islamic Center of Kansas	Olathe	KS	Harassment	After speaking about Quranic text mandating that Muslims value all human life, a khatib then specifically called on God and only God to punish the Israeli government and 'criminals' who supported the genocide in Gaza. U.S. Rep. Alford (R-MO) wrote to the U.S. Attorney General asking her to investigate "domestic Islamic religious institutions and designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations."
Nov.	Al-Mu'minun Masjid	Statesville	NC	DDV	The mosque was vandalized with spraypainted images reportedly including the phrase "go home," a cross, a scribbled image of a dead pig, and the number 1683 spray-painted on the side of the mosque, an apparent reference the year of a battle between Muslims and Christians in Europe.
Nov.	Masjid Sadar	Sayreville	NJ	Zoning	Mosque backers filed a "73-page suit" alleging that the town "Board violated the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) by 'imposing and implementing land use regulations in a manner that discriminates against (Masjid Sadar) on the basis of religion.'"

Month	Name of Center or Mosque	City	State	Mosque Incident Type	Details
Dec.	Islamic Society of Tulsa	Broken Arrow	OK	Zoning	During a zoning hearing for the mosque, speakers made Islamophobic comments . One is reported to have said, "This is a Christian nation," said one resident. "Islam is incompatible with Christianity. Islam is incompatible with our Constitution." The council voted initially in favor of the mosque but reversed this in early 2026. This entry considers only the 2025 Anti-Muslim remarks.
Dec.	Dar Al Nur Community Center	Fairfax	VA	DDV	Dr. Tony Hsiao allegedly swung a metal rod at a group of women leaving prayer while yelling "F*CKING MUSLIMS" and ultimately damaged some of the mosque's property. Hsiao has since been charged with assault and battery, trespassing, and destruction of property. Hsiao was arrested in March 2024 for a similar incident where he allegedly harassed and attacked people who had gathered for prayer at the same location.
Dec.	Masjid Ash-Shura Mosque	Norfolk	VA	DDV	A vandal spraypainted crosses on the mosque .
Dec.	East Plano Islamic Center (EPIC)	East Plano	TX	Intimidation	As part of Texas Gov. Abbott's anti-Muslim campaign, EPIC was investigated by the Texas State Securities Board (TSSB) . After months of review, state officials concluded that no securities violations occurred. In December, Texas Attorney General Paxton filed suit against EPIC alleging securities fraud. Paxton had written to the TSSB in mid-October inviting them to review his evidence. In a statement, TSSB notes that Paxton's letter inviting them to review his evidence was sent after a press release announcing it had been issued, that TSSB staff had asked to see the evidence "within minutes" of learning of the press release, and "To date, neither Securities Commissioner Iles nor the staff of the TSSB have been provided with corresponding evidence to review."
Dec.	East Plano Islamic Center (EPIC)	East Plano	TX	Harassment	Anti-Islam activist Jake Lang carried a pig's head as part of his "Americans Against Islamification" protest. EPIC was a target of his protest.
Dec.	Multiple Sites	Multiple Cities	CA	Harassment	Google Account user labeled "Robert Oliveri" posted anti-Muslim content to at least 76 Islamic places of worship

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Endnotes

1. “Sharia,” an Arabic word meaning “the way to water,” is not a foreign legal system but a personal moral and spiritual framework that guides Muslims in prayer, charity, fasting, and ethical conduct while requiring them to obey the laws of the lands in which they live.
2. Out of Scope (921 complaints) was numerically the fourth largest category. As this umbrella contains a variety of complaint types, we cannot make any substantive assertions about them. For this reason, we instead feature the list of bias incident types that illustrate to the reader more specific types of bias complaints we are receiving from community members.
3. For 2025 reporting, we split our former hate crimes/incidents category into two separate categories, hate crimes and hate incidents. The intent is to better understand where CAIR intake staff see incidents that include likely criminal acts. For 2025, however, that means we cannot draw insight from past reports.
4. Incidents involving the same place and people separated by more than 2 hours are counted as separate incidents. In part, this is because the same individual will at times target a place of worship over a period of days or weeks, or may commit one act, leave, and then return later. As noted in the main body text, we made an exception for a person using the Google Maps profile “Robert Olivieri” in 2025 and counted his at least 78 posts targeting dozens of California mosques as one incident.
5. CAIR has previously tallied “mosque incidents,” but as the Muslim community has grown, locations where Muslims pray that can be targeted by bias incidents has also changed.
6. CAIR researchers captured four Islamic places of worship incidents that were suspicious but based on publicly available evidence do not currently meet our criteria for inclusion in our dataset. These were Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center (September), Al Hikma Mosque (September and October), and Masjid Uthman (November). Local community leaders expressed concern about the string of incidents. They cited both a high volume of incidents involving Islamic places of worship and possible apathy regarding the issue from public officials.
7. Some text from CAIR’s July 2025 analysis Epic Hate in Texas is reproduced here.
8. See this report’s section on the return of efforts to ban sharia for the importance of the ALAC connection and the overall notion that the government can disfavor a religion by banning it.
9. Citations for the incidents can be found in the text of the letter.
10. CAIR research staff searched <https://www.usaspending.gov/> for 2025 grant awards labeled “nonprofit security” in the Award Description field on January 9, 2025. Since the funds go to states for them to administer to nonprofits, only states were returned. As such, we cannot determine the extent to which Muslim organizations received grants.
11. See the Complaint Categories section for the definitions CAIR uses for these incident types.
12. See the methodology section for details on the 2025 typing definition changes.

“Free speech is a cornerstone of our Constitution that no president can wipe away with an executive order. Like the college students who once protested segregation, the Vietnam war, and apartheid South Africa, the diverse collection of college students who protested against Israel's genocidal war on Gaza deserve our country's thanks.” - **CAIR statement**

“We unequivocally condemn the abduction of a young Muslim hijab-wearing scholar by masked federal agents in broad daylight. This alarming act of repression is a direct assault on free speech and academic freedom.” - **CAIR-MA Executive Director Tahirah Amatul-Wadud** on the abduction of Rumeysa Ozturk by federal immigration authorities

“We always have this low-grade Islamophobia that just ebbs and tides as time goes on.”
- **CAIR-DFW Executive Director Mustafaa Carroll**

“All Americans should be alarmed at the speed of attacks on basic constitutional freedoms of lawful residents in the U.S.” - **CAIR Deputy Director Edward Ahmed Mitchell, Esq.**

“This recognition of Eid as a [school] holiday sends a powerful message of inclusion and respect to Muslim families in Milford and across Connecticut.” - **CAIR-CT Chairman Farhan Memon**

“If this country means what it says about freedom of religion, then it must mean it for Muslim women; not just in theory, not just in court, but in the fluorescent-lit back rooms of detention facilities, when no cameras are rolling and no one is watching,” - **CAIR-LA Civil Rights Managing Attorney Dina Chehata, Esq.**

CAIR IS AMERICA'S LARGEST MUSLIM CIVIL RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION. ITS MISSION IS TO ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM, PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS, PROMOTE JUSTICE, AND EMPOWER AMERICAN MUSLIMS.



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