

February 23, 2010

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

Dear Chairman King:

As a coalition of civil and human rights organizations, we are deeply troubled by the announced hearings on “radicalization of the American Muslim community and homegrown terrorism.”<sup>1</sup> As currently described, these hearings will single out American Muslims for public scrutiny. By doing so, the hearings will place an entire community under suspicion.

The message sent by the hearings is that people of certain faiths are less deserving of protection under the law—thus leading to further discrimination and violations of rights. Broadly targeting any community on the basis of religion creates a chilling effect on fundamental First Amendment rights of free exercise of religion. Ours is a nation of religious freedom and our participatory democracy requires that all of us are able to freely exercise our freedoms of speech, religion and association without fear. Government targeting of people for scrutiny based on their faith is wrong and is an affront to all Americans, challenging our most fundamental constitutional principles.

We are concerned that these hearings will create further unwarranted suspicion of the American Muslim community and stoke anti-Muslim sentiment. Such resentment may lead to hate crimes and violence directed toward Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim. In addition, we believe that these hearings, as planned, will be unable to improve our homeland security. Rather, the hearings will undermine public safety by eroding the trust in law enforcement and government of not just the American Muslim community but of all Americans. Law enforcement officers and community members agree that diminished trust in law enforcement across different communities is the principal barrier to cooperation. Policies or practices that target Muslims leave community members so afraid of law enforcement that they do not report crimes such as domestic violence or even seek medical treatment.

We urge you to cancel these hearings or, in the alternative, place your focus on security measures that target individual behavior, not whole communities of faith. The Committee should look critically at threats to our country rather than engage in the harmful and divisive singling out of

---

<sup>1</sup> Rep. Peter King, “What’s Radicalizing Muslim Americans?” *Newsday*, December 17, 2010.

## Coalition Letter to Chairman Peter King

any American community based on race, ethnicity, religion or national origin. We hope that you will work diligently to ensure that Muslims in America can continue to enjoy religious freedom, civil liberties, and their other constitutional and human rights.

Sincerely,

### **National Groups**

- Rights Working Group (*Washington, DC*)
- 9to5, National Association of Working Women (*Denver, CO*)
- Allies Of Peace (*Oakland, CA*)
- America-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (*Washington, DC*)
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) (*Washington, DC*)
- American MidEast Leadership Network (*Washington, DC*)
- Arab American Action Network (*Chicago, IL*)
- Arab American Institute (*Washington, DC*)
- Arab Muslim American Federation (*Brooklyn, NY*)
- Asian American Justice Center (*Washington, DC*)
- Black Law Enforcement America (*Washington, DC*)
- Breakthrough (*New York, NY*)
- Bill of Rights Defense Committee (*Northampton, MA*)
- Border Network for Human Rights (*El Paso, TX*)
- Center for Constitutional Rights (*New York, NY*)
- Coalition for Prisoners' Rights (*Santa Fe, NM*)
- Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) (*Washington, DC*)
- Defending Dissent Foundation (*Silver Spring, MD*)
- Fellowship of Reconciliation USA (*Nyack, NY*)
- The Gamaliel Foundation (*Chicago, IL*)
- Human Rights First (*Washington, DC*)
- Human Rights Watch (*New York, NY*)
- Immigration Equality (*New York, NY*)
- Laotian American National Alliance, Inc. (LANA) (*Washington, DC*)
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (*Baltimore, MD*)
- Muslim Legal Fund of America (*Richardson, TX*)
- Muslim Advocates (*Washington, DC*)
- Muslim American Society Immigrant Justice Center (MASJIC) (*Raleigh, NC*)
- National Immigration Law Center (*Washington, DC*)
- National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC) (*Los Angeles, CA*)
- National Council of La Raza (NCLR) (*Washington, DC*)
- National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC) (*Dearborn, MI*)

## Coalition Letter to Chairman Peter King

- National People's Action (NPA) (*Chicago, IL*)
- Political Research Associates (*Somerville, MA*)
- Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) (*Washington, DC*)
- South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) (*Washington, DC*)
- UNITED SIKHS (*New York, NY*)
- VivirLatino.com (*New York, NY*)

### **State/Regional Groups**

- Alliance for a Just Society, (formerly known as Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO)) (*Seattle, WA*)
- American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Massachusetts Chapter (*Boston, MA*)
- Arab American Association of New York (*New York, NY*)
- Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) (*Dearborn, MI*)
- CASA de Maryland, Inc. (*Silver Spring, MD*)
- Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga (*Ithaca, NY*)
- CAUSA Oregon (*Salem, OR*)
- Center for Community Alternatives (*New York, NY*)
- Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) (*Los Angeles, CA*)
- CODEPINK Arizona (*Phoenix, AZ*)
- Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC) (*Denver, CO*)
- Democratic State Committee (*New York, NY*)
- Empire Justice Center (*New York, NY*)
- Florida Immigrant Coalition (*Miami, FL*)
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) (*Chicago, IL*)
- Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (*Des Moines, IA*)
- Justice Team, Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community (*Omaha, NE*)
- Justice and Peace Commission (*Foxboro, MA*)
- Korean American Resource & Cultural Center (*Chicago, IL*)
- Korean Resource Center (*Ellicott City, MD*)
- Maine People's Alliance (*Portland, ME*)
- Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) (*Boston, MA*)
- Midwood Development Corporation (*New York, NY*)
- Muslim Bar Association of New York (*New York, NY*)
- Network of Arab-American Professionals (NAAP), New York Chapter (*New York, NY*)
- New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) (*New York, NY*)

## Coalition Letter to Chairman Peter King

- One America (*Seattle, WA*)
- Students Working for Equal Rights (*Miami, FL*)
- Trikone Northwest (*Seattle, WA*)
- Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (*Nashville, TN*)
- Voces de la Frontera (*Milwaukee, WI*)

### **Local Groups**

- Amigos Multicultural Services Center (*Eugene, OR*)
- Casa Esperanza (*Plainfield, NJ*)
- Casa Latina (*Seattle, WA*)
- Center for Immigrant Justice (*Staten Island, NY*)
- Central American Legal Assistance (*Brooklyn, NY*)
- Chhaya CDC (*Queens, NY*)
- Chicano Advocacy And Information Institute (*Tempe, AZ*)
- CITA (*Albion, NY*)
- Comunidad Liberación/Liberation Community (*Denver, CO*)
- Communications Workers of American (CWA) Local 83188 (*Raleigh, NC*)
- Congregation Beit Simchat Torah (CBST) (*New York, NY*)
- Council of Peoples Organization (COPO) (*Brooklyn, NY*)
- Counselors Helping (South) Asians/Indians, Inc. (CHAI) (*Ellicott City, MD*)
- The Ecotopian Society (*Brodhead, WI*)
- Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition (*New York, NY*)
- Greater NYC for Change (*New York, NY*)
- Holy Innocents Episcopal Church (*Little Lake, Michigan*)
- Israel Palestine Peace, Education, and Action Group of Northeastern Connecticut (*Storrs, CT*)
- Juan Neumann Center (*Brooklyn, NY*)
- Judson Memorial Church (*New York, NY*)
- La Fuente: New York and Long Island Civic Participation Projects (*New York, NY*)
- La Union (*Brooklyn, NY*)
- Latinos and Supporters Advocating for Justice and Advancement (*Holland, MI*)
- Long Island Immigrant Alliance (*Amityville, NY*)
- Malcolm X Center for Self Determination (*Greenville, SC*)
- MinKwon Center for Community Action (*Flushing, NY*)
- Paso del Norte Civil Rights Project (*El Paso, TX*)
- Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans (*Seattle, WA*)
- Rights For All People (*Aurora, CO*)
- Riverside Language Program, Inc. (*New York, NY*)
- Rockland Immigration Coalition (*Rockland County, NY*)
- Reconciliation and Culture Cooperative Network (RACCOON, Inc.)

Coalition Letter to Chairman Peter King

*(New York, NY)*

- San Diego Day Laborers Association *(Vista, CA)*
- School of the Americas Watch *(Los Angeles, CA)*
- Sisters and Associates of St. Francis, Tiffin *(Marsh, OH)*
- South Asian Network (SAN) *(Artesia, CA)*
- Unitarian Universalist Congregation *(Santa Rosa, CA)*
- Wilco Justice Alliance *(Williamson County, TX)*
- Workers' Rights Law Center of New York, Inc. *(Kingston, NY)*

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