

	TAGLINE	<p>DISPEL THE FEAR, STOP THE HATE. STAND UP TO “ISLAMOPHOBIA”</p> <p>Don't let the actions of a few result in acts of intolerance against an entire religion</p>
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	THE PROBLEM	<p>The targeted campaign to demonize Muslims and their faith is fueling hate, creating discord and even inspiring violence, thereby jeopardizing American values, ideals, and even its security.</p>
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	THE SOLUTION	<p>Speaking out against “Islamophobia” (a new form of bigotry).</p>
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	KEY TALKING POINTS
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Below you will find four broad areas that you should keep your responses focused upon. While the media may try to make you focus on a particular issue (Park51, TN Mosque, etc.), you should politely and firmly bring the conversation back to the talking points below. There are “pre-built” statements you can use under each topic area. Detailed background material for each topic follows.

1. "ISLAMOPHOBIA" IS BIGOTRY

- “We define ‘Islamophobia’ as *calculated bigotry against Muslims for political and cultural purposes*. It should be called just that: bigotry.
- “The fear, hatred and intense disdain of Islam and Muslims are predicated on prejudice and bigotry and are being used to exclude Muslims from the economic, social, and public life of the nation.”
- “Islamophobes are exploiting Americans’ emotions and sensitivities associated with 9/11 and the location of the World Trade Center (aka Ground Zero).”
- “Islamophobia capitalizes on fear and creates fear in the target population among its supporters.”

2. WE ARE ALL CONCERNED/ANXIOUS:

- “The actions of a few are breeding anxiety and fear in many Americans.”
- “We understand that people are scared and anxious in the current charged climate. “
- “The fear which people feel regarding Muslims is perfectly understandable given the current climate and the framework provided by the media.”
- “Muslims are also feeling anxious having been subject to hate speech, violence and discrimination.”

3. WE ARE AMERICAN:

- *We are Muslim and we are American. Islam in America is American.* It is not an extension or instrument of political players in the Muslim World. Muslims have been part of the American fabric since its founding.
- “American values are Muslim Values,” including the values of freedom, charity, family, and the importance of education and hard work.

- “Muslim Americans are upright and hard-working citizens excelling in all walks of life, including medicine, engineering, law, business and other fields and are neighbors, co-workers, and friends.”
- “America was built upon the ideal of religious and ethnic diversity; Muslim Americans are a positive part of this diversity.”
- “America values charity, and Islam has charity at its core” (Good opportunity to draw attention to positive Ramadan activities and Muslim Service Day and values).
- “No clear-thinking American would rip the Constitution apart with religious discrimination and hate. We are united with all Americans standing up for the fundamental American principles which make our country great.”
- “In defending the rights of our citizenry, we recognize and acknowledge the rights of others, however hurtful or disrespectful they may be to us.”
- “As the Constitution protects Muslims' rights to build mosques, we recognize that it also protects opponents' rights to protest the building of a mosque. It also protects the right to burn the Quran in protest and our right to protest the burning. “

4: “ISLAMOPHOBIA” HARMS AMERICA

- “Anti-Muslim bigotry puts our troops in danger and undermines our national security.”
- “With our troops sacrificing so much to win ‘hearts and minds’ in Muslim countries, this campaign of hate by is dangerous and counter-productive.”
- “Islamophobes are extremists and their tactics are no different than the tactics of the terrorists, namely to paint an entire group with a broad brush.”
- “Muslims serve in all branches of our armed forces.”
- “Muslims from many nations are serving side-by-side with American troops.”

BACKGROUND ON THE TALKING POINTS/ WHAT YOU SHOULD SAY:

POINT 1 - ISLAMOPHOBIA

A. IT'S NOT "ISLAMOPHOBIA", IT'S BIGOTRY

Remember the issue being debated is bigotry and how dangerous it is to all Americans. The term "Islamophobia" has gone mainstream, but alternate terms include: Anti-Muslim, Anti-Islam and Bigotry.

When asked about Park51 (formerly known as Cordoba House) or other campaigns of bigotry, focus on the points emphasized rather than the facts and details of these specific issues. The hateful images and anti-Muslim rhetoric in the media are making people realize that that these isolated incidents are all part of a broader theme of bigotry and hate. Bigotry is corrosive to society at large.

We need to own the frame and push our narrative back to the issue at hand.

This is not against Muslims ~ **it is against anyone who is different.**

"The issue of 'Islamophobia' (anti-Muslimism) is part of a pattern of bigotry, hate and violence."

B. BUT WHAT IS "ISLAMOPHOBIA"?

The term 'Islamophobia' was coined in the United States in the 1980s. After September 11, the term became more commonly used, and now it is a household word.

'Islamophobia' is the fear, hatred and intense disdain of Islam and Muslims. It is the practice of discriminating against Muslims by excluding them from the economic, social, and public life of the nation.

"What we are seeing now is not just a phobia - it is calculated bigotry against Muslims for political and cultural gain - and should be called just that."

'Islamophobia' has two components:

1. Opposition to Islam as a religion, which is where terms like 'shariah', 'jihad' and 'dhimmi' are used (and misused) as bait.
2. Opposition to Muslims, which often converges with racist sentiments. The Southern Poverty Law Center has reported an alarming rise in white supremacist activities since President Obama's election. One of the telling aspects of this campaign that shows its racist nature is the growing belief that Obama is Muslim and was not born in the U.S.

C. HOW IS IT BEING USED AGAINST MUSLIMS?

'Islamophobia' can be either political or cultural in its perspective. The current strain of 'Islamophobia' is a political strategy and thus very dangerous.

In the US, 'Islamophobia' is on the rise, and we are currently in the throes of the largest coordinated attack on Islam and Muslims to date. While there has been a wave of opposition to mosques across the country, much of the focus of this campaign has been on Park51. Whether the focus is upon local mosques or Park51, what is really being attacked is not Muslims and Islam, but religious freedom. With regard to Park51, Islamophobes are also exploiting the American people's emotions and sensitivities associated with 9/11 and the location of the World Trade Center (aka 'Ground Zero').

These events are the result of a well-funded and well-coordinated national effort. These efforts have succeeded in raising levels of prejudice, anti-Muslim rhetoric, hate crimes and vandalism - even in New York City - which experienced only low levels of anti-Muslim bias post-9/11

These destructive attacks require a similar level of coordination in our response by organizing nationally as well as locally.

D. WHY NOW? WHAT IS CAUSING THE INCREASE IN THIS HATE?

The recent series of unfortunate events, including Fort Hood, 'the Underwear Bomber' and the most recent alleged plot by Faisal Shahzad, etc. have made American Muslims vulnerable. These events have built a momentum of fear of home-grown terrorism (and Muslims by association) in Americans. This fear is being realized in the anti-mosque and 'anti-Shariah' protests.

Politicians desperate to find an issue to paint themselves as 'patriotic' have seized upon these fears and tied them to the mid-term elections in November. By the end of the election season, political 'Islamophobia' will likely recede regardless of who wins. But hardcore Islamophobes like Spencer and Geller will have by then become more influential and more mainstream and will continue to influence the media and the debate. The anti-mosque and 'anti-Shariah' campaign is directed against what Spencer and Pipes call stealth/legal Islamists. They claim that the Muslim Brotherhood controls official Islam in America and is seeking to Islamicize America through ISNA, CAIR, Park51 etc. As long as this idea prevails, they will continue to target moderates, whom they see as more dangerous than radicals who are easy to identify and prosecute.

Point 2: WE ARE ALL FEELING CONCERNED/ANXIOUS

In dealing with the public, there is a maxim we should all follow: “Feelings are facts.”

When having a discussion with a neighbor, your points and facts may be 100% correct when stating your case. However if you ignore feelings - regardless if the feelings are based on truth - you are overlooking very important facts in your discussion.

If your neighbor is angry, sad, scared or fearful, *that is a fact* and he or she will feel that you are being disrespectful by ignoring this fact. Feelings must be acknowledged and addressed to move meaningful discussions forward.

A. AMERICAN MUSLIMS ARE CONCERNED/ANXIOUS

Americans and American Muslims alike care for their families and loved ones, their well-being and their neighbors. What are the points driving the fear among American Muslims?

- The recent attack against a New York Cab Driver.
- The bombing of a mosque in Jacksonville.
- Arson at the construction site of a Tennessee mosque.
- A pig left at a California mosque.
- Protests being held outside mosques all over the US.
- The growing instances of workplace discrimination.
- The constant media barrage portraying Muslims as ‘the enemy’.
- The call of national politicians for Muslims to be singled out for additional scrutiny.
- The constant fear of being the victims of vigilantes.

B. AMERICANS AT LARGE ARE CONCERNED/ANXIOUS

The constant media coverage has enforced these perceptions:

- All terrorists are Muslim.
- All terrorism is coming from Muslim countries.
- Muslim countries are where America is at war.
- Al-Qaeda, Taliban and Wahibi interpretation of Islam are ‘correct’ and those with other views are ‘apologists.’
- Muslims will implement Sharia law and bring honor killings, ‘burqas,’ and stoning to the US.
- American values, freedoms and democracy are scorned by Muslims and can never co-exist.

Any person subjected to 24-hour ‘news’ channels promoting this perception will feel anxious and determined to strongly address the ‘threat’ and demand elected officials ‘do something.’

We must acknowledge that people are scared and anxious in the current charged climate. It is perfectly natural for people to have fear of Muslims given the current climate and the framework provided by the media. Fear, even irrational fear, needs to be acknowledged then confronted.

Point 3: WE ARE AMERICAN

A. WE ARE AMERICAN

We are Muslim and we are American. Islam in America is American. It is neither an extension nor instrument of political players in the Muslim World

Muslims have been here for centuries and have never done the things people have accused us of doing. We have invested in the infrastructure of America, with our careers, relationships, lives, money and property.

The troublemakers are part of the fringe, not the mainstream. There is no coordinated effort by any group of Muslims to do any of the things. America is home to over 1,900 mosques which, without exception, condemn terrorism.

The Duke University study released in January 2010 ‘Anti-Terror Lessons of Muslim American Communities’, states that “Muslim-American communities have been active in preventing radicalization.” Further, it states that, “This is one reason that Muslim-American terrorism has resulted in fewer than three dozen of the 136,000 murders committed in the United States since 9/11.”

Extremism has been pushed decisively out of the American Muslim mainstream. Islam and democracy are compatible. Many American Muslims are politically active, and many of us serve in our nation’s armed forces, police and fire departments and work in our federal, state and local government.

For decades, Muslim Americans have been in positions of trust and authority (doctors, engineers, large employers, law enforcement, military, etc.) and have honored their covenant with their fellow Americans.

Muslims are everyday Americans. They are teachers, police, firefighters, business owners, soldiers, sailors, doctors, lawyers, laborers, office workers, construction workers and taxpayers. Muslims were among those killed on September 11. And Muslims were among the first responders who answered the call and died trying to help the victims when we were attacked.

(In some ways this is a right of passage - justified or not. Catholics, Jews, African Americans, Irish and Italians have all gone through this.)

- “We can be true to our faith and true to our country without conflict.”
- “We (American Muslims) see our future in America and care about America’s security and prosperity.”
- “We are more like you than you think, we talk about the same things over dinner that all other Americans do.”
- “Piety to a minority religion is no obstacle to patriotism” - Michael Bloomberg, August 24, 2010

B. WE STAND FOR AMERICAN VALUES.

“American values *are* Muslim values.”

Muslims embrace American values and the proof of this is they have not tried to change those values since they arrived on these shores.

American Muslims love America *because* of its values: unity, diversity, charity, family, tolerance, religious freedom and pluralism. American values are aligned with Islam and Islamic values.

With almost universal agreement, Muslims believe American values are completely consistent with Islamic principles. American Muslims actively protect the principles upon which America was founded. Many go so far to say that even more than in Muslim countries, the American system today is the most progressive in the world, in terms of the protections it affords its citizens and that Islam enjoys upon its followers.

In this current debate:

“America values all people, and Muslims embrace this ideal.” O humankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (Qur’an 49:13).

“America values diversity, and Muslim Americans are diverse.” American Muslims are not a monolith. Over a quarter of America’s Muslims are African-American; over 55% are South Asian and Arab; 5% are Hispanic; and 15% are of a variety of other ethnicities.

“America’s greatest strengths are its religious freedom and pluralism.” American Muslims are not monolithic in their understanding or practice of their faith. They represent different ways of practicing Islam, and have multiple opinions and perspectives based on their ethnic, educational and ideological diversity.

“America greatest strengths are religious freedom and pluralism.” America’s founders valued the ideal of religious freedom because they came to the New World in order to escape religious persecution. Muslims deeply value the right to practice their faith in America without interference from the government.

C. WE HAVE RIGHTS

As citizens, we have Constitutional rights.

“...we are Americans, each with an equal right to worship and pray where we choose.” - Michael Bloomberg, August 24, 2010

“No clear-thinking American would rip the Constitution apart with religious discrimination and hate. We are united with all Americans standing up for the fundamental American principles that make our country great.”

“ We are citizens and have the right to religious freedom, denying us this puts our constitutional rights at risk” (Constitutional rights plays better across America than “civil rights,” which tend to be interpreted as a left-wing/liberal concern)

D. JUST AS WE HAVE RIGHTS, OTHERS HAVE RIGHTS

Just as our Constitution protects Muslims' rights to build mosques, it protects opponents' rights to protest the building of the mosque. It also protects the right to burn the Quran in protest and opponents' rights to protest the burning.

Essentially, to demand the rights of our citizenry, we recognize and acknowledge the rights that others have, however hurtful or disrespectful they may be to us.

When American Muslims faced issues such as the Danish cartoons, “Draw Muhammad Day,” South Park, etc., they have proven time and again that the bigots' expectations of dangerous reprisals are completely false. The facts are clear that American Muslims support and cherish rights for everyone.

Point 4: “ISLAMOPHOBIA” HARMS AMERICA

Bigotry in the guise of “Islamophobia” corrodes the core of what America stands for. It is counter to American values and gives credence to those pushing radical ideologies.

- “Anti-Muslim bigotry puts our troops in danger and undermines our national security.”
- “When our troops are sacrificing so much to win the ‘hearts and minds’ in Muslim countries, the anti-Muslim zealots must understand that their rhetoric is dangerous and counter-productive.”
- “Islamophobes are extremists and their tactics are no different than the tactics of the terrorists. “
- “Muslims serve in all branches of our armed forces”
- “Muslims from many nations are serving side-by-side with American troops”

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Gallup Resources on Islam, Muslim Views and Statistics

<http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2009/May/20090505143038SB1ebahC0.2072369.html>

Report Recommends Ways to Discourage Muslim-American Radicalization - January 6, 2010

http://sanford.duke.edu/news/features/muslim_american_survey_nr010610.php

Islamophobia Today website

<http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/>

Loonwatch.com website

<http://www.loonwatch.com/>

Gallup: Research for *Who Speaks for Islam?*

<http://www.gallup.com/press/109918/how-conduct-research.aspx>

CNN: Is America Islamophobic? - September 2, 2010

<http://www.cnn.com/video/data/2.0/video/us/2010/09/02/am.feyerick.islamophobia.cnn.html>

Washington Post: Five Myths About Mosques in America - August 29, 2010

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/26/AR2010082605510.html?hpid=opinionsbox1>

Politico: Why Americans Love Conspiracies - August 27, 2010

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0810/41515.html>

Politics Daily: Islamophobia Imported From Europe: An Ugly Trend Gets Uglier - August 27, 2010

<http://www.politicsdaily.com/2010/08/28/importing-islamophobia-from-europe-an-ugly-trend-gets-uglier/>

Anti-Muslim Bias, Absent After 9/11, Surfaces in New York - August 26, 2010

http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/culture/3135/eid_on_9_11_anniversary/

Politico: Bloomy to Jon Stewart: Mosque issue fades post-November - August 26, 2010

[http://www.politico.com/blogs/maggiehaberman/0810/Bloomy to Jon Stewart Mosque issue fades postNovember.html?showall](http://www.politico.com/blogs/maggiehaberman/0810/Bloomy%20to%20Jon%20Stewart%20Mosque%20issue%20fades%20postNovember.html?showall)

The Week: The billionaire Koch brothers: Tea Party puppetmasters? - August 24, 2010

<http://theweek.com/article/index/206405/the-billionaire-koch-brothers-tea-party-puppetmasters>

Salon: The "mosque" debate is not a "distraction" - August 23, 2010

http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/glenn_greenwald/2010/08/23/park51/index.htm

Huffington Post: Build the 'Mosque' or Burn the Qu'ran? It Hurts Some, But It Is Constitutional - August 23, 2010

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zareena-a-grewal-phd/build-or-burn-it-hurts-some-but-it-is-constitutional/index.html>

HuffPo: Five Questions Swirling about the "Ground Zero Mosque" Debate - August 22, 2010

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/salam-al-marayati/five-swirling-questions-about-the-ground-zero-mosque-debate/index.html>

Washington Post: Bitter religious fighting over mosque plays right into al-Qaeda's hands

<http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/guestvoices/2010/08/by-evan-f-kohlmann-the.html>

Washington Post: Reporters should address American concerns about Islam

<http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/guestvoices/2010/08/reporters-should-address-americans-concerns-about-islam.html>

Park51 Controversy Requires Less Heat, More Light

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/omid-safi/less-heat-more-light-on-park51/index.html>

TIME: Does America Have a Muslim Problem? - August 18, 2010

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2011798,00.html>

TIME: Islamophobia and the 'Ground Zero Mosque' Debate - August 18, 2010
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2009147,00.html>

HuffPo - Conservative Muslims: Don't Bring Mosque Debate Into the Elections - August 17, 2010
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/08/17/conservative-muslimamerica_n_684692.html