

92% of New Muslim Candidates Won't Express Support for Constitution; One MN Republican Makes it Bipartisan

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It is not appropriate to label all, or even the majority of those, who question Islam and Muslims as Islamophobes.

(CAIR Report 2013, Legislating Fear: Islamophobia and its Impact in the United States, p. ix)

In January 2020, I wrote about the results of a survey I had done in which I presented four questions to eighty Muslim public officials across the United States; each question asked the Muslim public official to choose between following the U.S. Constitution/our man-made laws or Islamic Doctrine. An eye-opening 93% of these Muslim public officials would not express support for the U.S. Constitution or our man-made laws. Of the six who did express this support, only two allowed me to mention their name.^[1]

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<https://www.jihadwatch.org/2020/03/92-of-new-muslim-candidates-wont-express-support-for-constitution-one-mn-republican-makes-it-bipartisan>

I also submitted these same four questions to seven prominent Muslim Americans who have been publicly aspiring to reform Islam; I sent four similar questions, based on Canadian law, to six prominent Muslim Canadians who had also been publicly aspiring to reform Islam. Of these thirteen aspiring reformers, only two Muslim Americans and one Muslim Canadian responded saying they supported man-made laws over the commands of Allah and the teachings of Muhammad.^[2]

I then decided to submit the same four questions to 36 Muslim American candidates who appeared to be seeking public office for the first time.^[3]

We shall first look at the four questions I used and then examine the variety of responses I received from those Muslims seeking public office. I then list the Muslim candidates, by State, who did not respond. This is followed by my concluding remarks.

The Questions

On February 10, 2020, I sent the following e-mail to a group of 36 Muslims who were running, or had been running, for public office at various levels of government across the United States; on February 17th I sent it again to the Muslims who had not initially responded:^[4]

I have written extensively about Islam (six books and numerous articles and brochures) and think it important that non-Muslims gain a better understanding of Islam.

If you are elected to public office you will take an oath of office that includes swearing, or affirming, to support the United States Constitution. With that in mind, I am interested in your response, as a candidate who follows the religion of Islam, to the following questions:

No. 1: *Will you go on record now and state that our 1st Amendment right to freedom of speech gives the right to anyone in the United States to criticize or disagree with your prophet Muhammad, and will you also go on record now and state that you support and defend anyone's right to criticize or disagree with your prophet Muhammad, and that you condemn anyone who threatens death or physical harm to another person who is exercising that right?*

No. 2: *Our 1st Amendment guarantees freedom of religion in the United States. As part of that freedom, anyone in the United States has the right to join or leave any religion, or have no religion at all. Will you go on record now and state that you support and defend the idea that in the United States a Muslim has not only the freedom to leave Islam, but to do so without fear of physical harm, and will you also go on record now and state that you condemn anyone who threatens physical harm to a Muslim who is exercising that freedom?*

No. 3: According to the words of Allah found in Koran 5:38 and the teachings of your prophet Muhammad, amputation of a hand is an acceptable punishment for theft. But our U.S. Constitution, which consists of man-made laws, has the 8th Amendment that prohibits cruel and unusual punishment such as this. Do you agree with Allah and your prophet Muhammad that amputation of a hand is an acceptable punishment for theft in the United States, or do you believe that our man-made laws prohibiting such punishments are true laws and are to be followed instead of this 7th Century command of Allah and teaching of Muhammad?

No. 4: According to the words of Allah found in Koran 4:3, Muslim men are allowed, but not required, to be married to up to four wives. Being married to more than one wife in the United States is illegal according to our man-made bigamy laws. Do you agree with Allah that it is legal for a Muslim man in the United States to be married to more than one woman, or do you believe that our man-made laws prohibiting bigamy are true laws and are to be followed instead of this 7th Century command of Allah?

I look forward to your responses.

Support for the U.S. Constitution

Only three Muslim candidates clearly stated that they would support the U.S. Constitution/our man-made laws over Islamic Doctrine; they each gave me permission to use their name:

Deedra Abboudd (D), Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, Arizona

Iman-Utopia Layjou Bah (I), U.S. House of Representatives (AZ-2)

Rashid Malik (D), U.S. House of Representatives (GA-7)

Other Replies

I received various replies from five other Muslim candidates:

Leila Shukri Adan (D), U.S. House of Representatives (MN-5): On February 17th Adan responded to my second e-mail:

Thank you so much for your email and for the reminder. I am confirming receipt and will get back to you soon!

I have not heard back from Adan.

Muhammad Arif (D), United States Senate, Arizona: Arif responded the same day to the February 10th e-mail. He asked if we could meet for coffee or lunch to discuss the questions. I explained that I lived too far away for that. We exchanged several additional e-mails, and on February 11th he wrote:

Since you do not live in Arizona and I'm busy in my campaign because I have limited time ... can I email you these answer [sic] next week ... I apologize for delay [sic] because the questions I have to read carefully and answer in details [sic]

I replied that would be fine. The “next week” came and went, and on February 22nd I sent him an e-mail asking when I could expect his responses. I have not heard back from Arif.

Zainab Baloch (D), Mayor of Raleigh, North Carolina: Baloch lost the 2019 general election to become the Mayor of Raleigh. However, her subsequent social postings appeared to indicate that she was in politics for the long haul; she had written: “This isn’t a sprint, it’s a marathon.” On February 17th she responded to my second e-mail:

I didn't miss it [my first e-mail]. If I have time to respond to your harassing questions, I will. Have a great week!

I have not heard back from Baloch.

Ameena Matthews (D), U.S. House of Representatives (IL-1): On February 24th, in reply to my second e-mail, I received the following from Dr. La’Shawn Littrice, Matthews’ Campaign Manager:

Hi, Steve. How are you? I will forward this to Dr. Matthews and get it back to you by Wednesday [February 26th] of this week.

On February 28th I sent Littrice an e-mail asking her for an update. I have not heard back from Littrice.

Reem Subei (D), Ohio State Senate: In response to each of the two e-mails I sent Subei, I received the following form response:

Thank you for contacting Reem for Ohio. This campaign is about bringing justice and equality to all. Please click the link below to provide us with your preferred volunteering activity. Let's build a system that works for everyone, because we all win when we all win.

The link takes one to a form for volunteers to complete. I have received no other response from Subei.

No Reply

These Muslim candidates did not reply:

California

Kaisar Ahmed (Nonpartisan) – San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

Shahid Buttar (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (CA-12)

Fatima Shahnaz Iqbal-Zubair (D) – California State Assembly

Cenk Uygur (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (CA-25)

Colorado

Iman Jodeh (D) – Colorado State House of Representatives

Delaware

Madinah Wilson-Anton (D) – Delaware State House of Delegates

Georgia

Nabilah Islam (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (GA-7)

Illinois

Junaid “J” Afeef (D) – Kane County State’s Attorney

Rush Darwish (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (IL-3)

Mohammed Faheem (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (IL-8)

Sarah Gad (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (IL-1)

Inam Hussain (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (IL-8)

Moon Khan (D) – Circuit Court Clerk, DuPage County

Azam Nizamuddin (D) – Circuit Judge, Circuit Court of DuPage County

Abdelnasser Rashid (D) – Cook County Board of Review

Maryland

Saafir Rabb (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (MD-7)

Massachusetts

Ihssane Leckey (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (MA-4)

Nichole Mossalam (D) – Massachusetts State House of Representatives

Michigan

Solomon Rajput (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (MI-12)

Minnesota

Dalia Al-Aqidi (R) – U.S. House of Representatives (MN-5)

Omar Fateh (D) – Minnesota State Senate

New Jersey

Alp Basaran (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (NJ-9)

New York

Tahanie Aboushi (D) – Manhattan District Attorney

Shaniyat Chowdhury (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (NY-5)

Mary Jobaida (D) – New York State Assembly

Badrun Nahar Khan (D) – U.S. House of Representatives (NY-14)

Zohran Kwame Mamdani (D) – New York State Assembly

Ohio

Mohamud Jama (D) – Ohio State House of Representatives

Conclusion

These 36 Muslim Americans seeking public office would have to, if successful, take an oath of office that includes swearing (or affirming) to support the U.S. Constitution. In theory then, one would think such Muslim Americans would be quite willing even now to express their support for that Constitution and our man-made laws. The fact that 92% of them would not take this opportunity to express that support is troubling.

Troubling, but not surprising. As we saw earlier, 93% of current Muslim public officials and 77% of aspiring Muslim reformers also declined to make such a choice. This, in spite of the fact that anyone holding a public office in the United States is required to take an oath to support the U.S. Constitution and our man-made laws, and we regularly hear from aspiring Muslim reformers that Islamic Doctrine needs to be modernized and made more compatible with Western laws. But when faced with specific choices, instead of glittering generalities, 91% of all the Muslims listed in these three categories would not express support for Western laws over Islamic Doctrine.

One might wonder if it is fair to ask Muslims to make such a choice. It certainly is because of the irreconcilable conflict between major tenets of Islamic Doctrine and Western Laws, especially the U.S. Constitution.^[5]

Here is an additional consideration. In its 2020 *‘Muslim Vote Campaign’* the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) has included a questionnaire asking non-Muslim candidates and government officials whether or not they support specific “Muslim needs.” CAIR explained:

CAIR’s 2020 questionnaire is an update to its 2016 questionnaire and provides sample questions for Muslims to ask local city council, mayoral, state legislative, gubernatorial, and congressional candidates running for office and government officials.

Candidate responses to CAIR’s election questionnaire will assist American Muslims in evaluating each candidate’s leadership criteria and their ability to unite and engage the community on policies and programs that meet Muslim needs.

The questions and the issues included in the questionnaire emphasize the American Muslim community's concerns, as well as those of its civil rights, immigrant rights and worker rights allies. [6]

Here is a sampling of the issues about which the American Muslim community is concerned: [7]

1. Do you plan to address the rise in Islamophobia and hateful rhetoric towards Muslims in the United States?

2. Do you support the right of Muslim inmates to make religious accommodation requests for religious headwear, like hijabs, kufis, and other head coverings?

3. Do you support the right of Muslim inmates to make religious accommodation requests for copies of the Quran and other religious texts, prayer mats, prayer beads, and other religious items?

4. Do you support the right of Muslim inmates to make religious accommodation requests for modified meal schedules while fasting during Ramadan?

5. Do you support the right of Muslim inmates to make religious accommodation requests for daily congregational prayers and Friday religious services?

6. Do you support public school systems with significant Muslim populations in your congressional district and/or state closing for the Muslim holidays of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, when many students or faculty would otherwise be absent?

The focus of CAIR's questions is on the need for non-Muslims to accommodate certain Islamic religious teachings. Since CAIR has turned the focus on certain Islamic religious teachings, it is only appropriate that the focus should now be turned on all Islamic religious teachings, especially those that are irreconcilably in conflict with the U.S. Constitution and our man-made laws. Muslims running for and holding public office need to be asked about these conflicts and expected to publicly, categorically choose between the U.S. Constitution/our man-made laws and those contradictory teachings of their religion.

We need to pay heed to these words of Winston Churchill from 1940:

This is no time for ease and comfort. It is the time to dare and endure.

Dr. Stephen M. Kirby is the author of six books about Islam. His latest book is *Islamic Doctrine versus the U.S. Constitution: The Dilemma for Muslim Public Officials*.

[1] Stephen M. Kirby, “93% of Muslim Public Officials Would Not Express Support for the Constitution They Swore to Uphold,” *Jihad Watch*, January 7, 2020, <https://www.jihadwatch.org/2020/01/93-of-muslim-public-officials-would-not-express-support-for-the-constitution-they-swore-to-uphold>.

[2] Stephen M. Kirby, “The Adventures of Asking Muslim Reformers to Categorically Choose between Western Laws and Islam,” *Jihad Watch*, January 16, 2020, <https://www.jihadwatch.org/2020/01/the-adventures-of-asking-muslim-reformers-to-categorically-choose-between-western-laws-and-islam>.

[3] I would like to thank *Deplorable Kel* for a majority of these names: <https://deplorablekel.com/category/u-s-elections/2020-election/>.

[4] These questions were taken from Chapter 10 of my latest book, *Islamic Doctrine Versus the U.S. Constitution: The Dilemma for Muslim Public Officials* (Washington DC: Center for Security Policy Press, 2019); <https://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2019/12/03/csp-press-releases-primer-on-islamic-doctrine-versus-the-u-s-constitution/>.

[5] For details about this irreconcilable conflict see *Islamic Doctrine Versus the U.S. Constitution: The Dilemma for Muslim Public Officials*. For ways in which Islamic Doctrine allows Muslims to appear to take an oath to support the U.S. Constitution and our man-made laws, see Chapter 1, “Taking the Oath of Office.”

[6] “CAIR Launches 2020 ‘Muslims Vote’ Campaign with Release of Candidate Questionnaire, Calendar of Election Dates,” *CAIR*, January 21, 2020, https://www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-launches-2020-muslims-vote-campaign-with-release-of-candidate-questionnaire-calendar-of-election-dates/.

[7] “Sample Questions for Candidates and Public Officials,” *CAIR*, 2020, https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cairhq/pages/1125/attachments/original/1579621884/2020_Sample_Questions.pdf?1579621884.