

**Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission
Resolution 21-02 - Condemning Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Violence**

Summary: In response to past and recent acts of anti-Muslim violence in our community, this Resolution condemns Islamophobic speech and other acts of anti-Muslim bigotry as serious threats to public safety, and denounces the Islamophobic sentiments that give rise to such acts as false, hateful and antithetical to core American values.

WHEREAS, Islam is a religion whose adherents are called Muslims and is practiced by around 1,000 residents of Bloomington, 3.5 million Americans, and around one-quarter of the world's population; [1] and

WHEREAS, Islamophobia is a fear, hatred or prejudice toward Islam and people perceived as Muslim that manifests as a pattern of discrimination and oppression. It creates a distorted understanding of Islam and Muslims by transforming the global and historical faith tradition of Islam, along with the rich history of cultural and ethnic diversity of its adherents, into a set of stereotyped characteristics most often reducible to themes of violence, civilizational subversion and fundamental otherness; [2] and

WHEREAS, modern anti-Muslim tropes include portraying Muslims as monolithic, racially Brown, ethnically Arab, radical, violent, terrorist, dangerous, deceptive, medieval, barbaric, uncivilized, oppressive to women, intolerant, totalitarian; [3] and

WHEREAS, Islamophobia in the US spreads in five main ways:

1. Media representation that emphasizes negative stories about Muslims
2. Political rhetoric in which politicians encourage fear of Muslims to advance their interests
3. Backlash to the actions of violent extremists
4. Government and military leaders who use Islamophobia to justify US foreign policy in Muslim-majority nations as essential for our freedom and safety
5. The US Islamophobia network, a multi-million dollar industry of groups and individuals who falsely cast Islam as an existential threat to the interests of the US, and who work actively to promote prejudice, discrimination and oppression against Muslims; [4] and

WHEREAS, up to 20-30% of the enslaved Africans who were forcibly brought to the US during the Antebellum period are thought to have been Muslims, today Black Americans make up 20% of the Muslims in the US, and Islam has played a critical role in the US civil rights movement; [5] and

WHEREAS, between 2001 and 2021, the US government instituted several programs

that eroded the civil liberties of all Americans and targeted Muslims in America, including the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), the Patriot Act, the No-Fly list, the Watchlist, and the Muslim Ban; [6] and

WHEREAS, in 2015 Indiana Governor and Vice-Presidential Candidate Mike Pence attempted to block the resettlement of Syrian refugees to Indiana by citing concerns for safety and terrorism. This was struck down by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, where it was noted that the State of Indiana “provides no evidence that Syrian terrorists are posing as refugees or that Syrian refugees have ever committed acts of terrorism in the United States”; [7] and

WHEREAS, anti-Muslim bias incidents include acts of vandalism against mosques, school bullying, illegal discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech; and anti-Muslim bias incidents have risen sharply in the US since 2016, which is widely attributed to an increase in Islamophobic political rhetoric; [8] and

WHEREAS, Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes the right to freedom of religion and the right to manifest one’s religion in practice, worship or observance; [9] and

WHEREAS, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by the US in 1992, commits its parties to respect the religious freedom of individuals; [10] and

WHEREAS, the free exercise of religion is a fundamental American right, and the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment of the US Constitution prohibits the US government from restricting the free exercise of religion; [11] and

WHEREAS, the City of Bloomington's Comprehensive Plan lists as two of its core principles to "Fortify our strong commitment to equality, acceptance, openness and public engagement" and "Fortify our progress toward improving public safety and civility;" [12] and

WHEREAS, on May 6, 2020, the Bloomington Common Council unanimously adopted Resolution 20-06, entitled "Denouncing and Condemning White Nationalism and White Supremacy," in which it pledged "to continue pursuing policies and directing appropriate resources to ensure civil and human rights are protected and afforded to all individuals;" [13] and

WHEREAS, Bloomington Common Council Ordinance 20-20 grants the Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission authority to:

1. increase the safety of all Bloomington community members, especially those often marginalized due to race, disability, gender, sexual identity, or sexual orientation,

2. research evidence-based approaches to public safety focusing on those approaches outside the scope of traditional policing,
3. make recommendations to the Bloomington Common Council, the Board of Public Safety, and the Mayor's administration on policies and programs that enhance public safety for all community members; [14] and

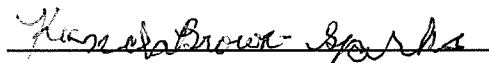
WHEREAS, the CAPS Commission is deeply disturbed that at least four anti-Muslim bias incidents have occurred in our community, including three acts of vandalism against a mosque in 2001, 2015 and 2021, and one hate crime in 2015; [15]

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED BY THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY ON PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. Celebrates Bloomington's Muslim population as an indelible, rich and valuable part of our community; and
2. Affirms the rights of Muslims, people from Muslim-majority nations, and people of Islamic heritage to safely reside in our community; and
3. Condemns all acts of violence, bigotry, hate speech and intimidation targeted at members of our community who are perceived to be Muslim as serious threats to public safety; and
4. Declares that Islamophobic speech:
 - a. is objectively false,
 - b. violates core American values such as liberty, equality and freedom, and
 - c. threatens the most basic civil liberties of all Americans, including and especially when spoken by government officeholders; and
5. Calls upon Mayor John Hamilton, the Office of the Mayor, all Common Councilmembers and the Board of Public Safety to:
 - a. actively condemn Islamophobic speech and other anti-Muslim bias incidents when they occur as serious threats to public safety;
 - b. reinforce that Islamophobia is not an American value;
 - c. endeavor to share factually true portrayals of Islam and Muslims as a valuable part of American society and of our local community.

PASSED by the Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 9th day of December, 2021.



_____, Chair
Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission

Citations:

1. Local Muslim population size estimated by Abdulkader Sinno, Ph. D., Political Science, Indiana University using census data and mosque event attendance, as communicated in an email conversation with Nejla Routsong on November 11, 2021
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3. <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/factsheet-common-anti-muslim-tropes-2/>
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6. <https://islamophobia.org/reports/remembrance-and-resilience-american-muslims-twenty-years-after-9-11/>
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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/07/24/donald-trump-is-expanding-his-muslim-ban-not-rolling-it-back/>
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<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/proclamation-ending-discriminatory-bans-on-entry-to-the-united-states/>
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<https://time.com/4517403/indiana-mike-pence-syrian-refugees-federal-court/>
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<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-09/anti-muslim-incidents-are-increasing-across-america>
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12. <https://bloomington.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plan>
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14. https://bloomington.in.gov/onboard/legislationFiles/download?legislationFile_id=5564
15. <https://bloomingtonian.com/2021/10/20/damage-still-being-assessed-after-vandalism-at-islamic-center-of-bloomington/>
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Citations:

15. (continued)

<https://www.southbendtribune.com/story/news/crime/2015/10/23/fbi-opens-hate-crime-probe-in-indiana-attack-on-muslim-woman/46611589/>

Note: While the FBI did not file federal hate crime charges in the 2015 attack against a Muslim member of our community, this event fits the definition of a hate crime in the view of this commission because the assailant yelled racial slurs, verbally expressed belief in white supremacy, and targeted the victim based on her perceived status as a Muslim by attempting to remove her headscarf during the attack.

Submitted by:

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