



2015 CAIR
CALIFORNIA
**CIVIL RIGHTS
REPORT**

ABOUT CAIR

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is the largest American Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States. Its mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. CAIR-California is the organization's largest and oldest chapter, with offices in the Greater Los Angeles Area, the Sacramento Valley, San Diego, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

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Message on Behalf of CAIR-California's Civil Rights Team

“Ultimately,” stated Robert F. Kennedy, “America’s answer to the intolerant man is diversity, the very diversity which our heritage of religious freedom has inspired.”

In 2014, CAIR-California celebrated 20 years of civil rights advocacy work on behalf of the American Muslim community. Throughout those 20 years, CAIR-California has advocated for the constitutionally protected right to religious freedom necessary to ward off intolerance and Islamophobia¹ in our nation and allow our communities to more fully realize their vastly diverse potentials.

CAIR-California’s Civil Rights Team is in the trenches as the American Muslim community’s first responder against such intolerance. Four offices across the state provide support for American Muslims across California. These offices are located in the Greater Los Angeles Area (CAIR-LA), the Sacramento Valley (CAIR-SV), San Diego (CAIR-SD), and the San Francisco Bay Area (CAIR-SFBA). In 2014, these offices assisted over 1,000 community members on issues including FBI voluntary questioning, state and local law enforcement abuses, employment discrimination, travel harassment, hate incidents, and immigration delays. As part of this assistance, CAIR-California filed two federal lawsuits against state and federal governmental agencies alleging severe harassment and religious discrimination, coordinated the dual filing of complaints with California’s Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) against one of the state’s biggest amusement park operators, and advocated on behalf of a family in mourning following a hate-motivated murder.

CAIR-California not only provides grassroots advocacy and free of charge legal services, but also gives dozens of community empowering “Know Your Rights” (KYR) presentations at mosques, schools, and community centers across California. These presentations empower American Muslims to respond when faced with civil rights abuses, as well as educate allies outside the Muslim community on the current climate of hate and discrimination their Muslim co-workers, classmates, and neighbors are subjected to on a regular basis.

There is much more work to do here at CAIR-California to curb this climate of Islamophobia. Thanks to the continued steadfast support of our community, we can continue to fight for the civil rights of all Americans and help diversity flourish in our great state of California.

Sincerely,



Brice Hamack, Esq.
Civil Rights Coordinator, CAIR-SFBA & CAIR-SV

¹ “Islamophobia is close-minded prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims.” Univ. of Cal., Berkeley’s Ctr. for Race and Gender and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), *Same Hate, New Target: Islamophobia and Its Impact in the United States January 2009-December 2010*, at 11 (2010), <http://crg.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/islamophobiareport2009-2010.pdf>.

Employment Discrimination

Right to Work Free from Harassment & Hate

Mr. Elsiddig Elhindi earns his living in an environment few would voluntarily enter—he is a correctional officer for the State of California.

Mr. Elhindi earned the respect and trust of many inmates by performing his job in a professional and respectful manner. He prides himself on treating everyone in his workplace, including inmates, with the highest levels of respect and equality. Unfortunately for Mr. Elhindi, his co-workers at California State Prison-Sacramento did not share that same respect for his Sudanese national origin or his Islamic faith.



Elsiddig Elhindi (left) and Northern California Civil Rights Coordinator Brice Hamack (right) discuss their recent lawsuit against the State of California on Huff Post Live.

For almost a decade his co-workers subjected him to what can only be described as “emotional torture.” They consistently referred to him as a “suicide bomber” and a “terrorist,” mocked his religious beliefs, referred to the United States as a “Christian nation” in a manner meant to make him feel unwelcome, mocked his Sudanese accent, and used derogatory terminology regarding his skin color. In addition to the emotional and verbal harassment, Mr. Elhindi’s co-workers failed to provide adequate support during inmate transfers and took other actions jeopardizing his safety and well-being.

When Mr. Elhindi internally filed multiple complaints to put an end to the hostile work environment, his co-workers and supervisors retaliated against him. His co-workers called him a “rat” and a “snitch,” and his supervisors denied him promotional opportunities.

In December 2014, following a thorough Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) investigation, CAIR-California filed a federal lawsuit against the State of California and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for their failure to protect Mr. Elhindi against such severe harassment.

While Mr. Elhindi’s experience is rare in its severity, there are unfortunately many American Muslims across California facing varying levels of employment discrimination based on their religious beliefs, race, and/or national origin. Such discrimination is prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII) and California’s Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA).²

Title VII and FEHA also protect employees’ rights to religious accommodations in the workplace. The statutes specifically provide that employers must grant employees reasonable religious accommodations, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship for the employer.

² 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(a)(1)-(2) (2014); Cal. Gov’t Code § 12940 (2015).

Jon Berts

Mr. Jon Berts enlisted in the United States Navy in 2002 like his father before him. Mr. Berts believes whole heartedly in the Navy's core values—honor, courage, and commitment and in serving his country to protect the freedoms it provides.

Up until 2011, he received numerous positive evaluations, medals, and was promoted to positions in which he was entrusted with educating incoming sailors. For a short period of that time he was also allowed to grow a beard for medical reasons. However, after requesting to grow a beard for Islamic reasons in 2011, he was harassed, had his loyalty to the United States questioned, was stripped of most of his job duties, and finally denied reenlistment at the end of his term.



Mr. Jon Berts, the plaintiff in CAIR-California's litigation against the United States Navy.

Because it was the United States Navy that discriminated against Mr. Berts, Title VII and FEHA did not apply. Instead, in December 2014, CAIR-California and Church State Council filed a lawsuit against the Department of the Navy and the Department of Defense grounded in the Religious Freedom of Restoration Act (RFRA) and the Administrative Procedure Act (APA).³

CAIR-California's litigation on behalf of Mr. Berts argues that the Navy failed to provide reasonable religious accommodations for Mr. Berts, subjected him to a hostile work environment based on his Islamic beliefs, and retaliated against him by stripping him of his performance duties and unjustly denying him reenlistment, all in violation of both RFRA and the APA. CAIR-California's litigation seeks Mr. Berts' reenlistment in the United States Navy so he can continue to fully serve the country he loves.

Unfortunately, discrimination against American Muslims in the employment sector has become systematic and deeply entrenched, affecting far more people than these numbers suggest. Recent studies found that fictional job applicants listing an affiliation with Islam were least likely to receive a phone call or e-mail response to their resume submission compared to similar resumes listing affiliations with other religions or no affiliations at all.⁴

³ The Church State Council is a religious liberty ministry of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists and is the oldest public policy organization in the southwestern United States devoted exclusively to issues of liberty of conscience and religion and the separation of church and state. *About Us*, Church St. Council, <http://www.churchstate.org/index.php?id=15>, (last visited June 10, 2015).

⁴ See Bradley R.E. Wright et al., *Religious Affiliation and Hiring Discrimination in New England: A Field Experiment*, 34 *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 111 (2013); see also Michael Wallace et al., *Religious Affiliation and Hiring Discrimination in the American South: A Field Experiment*, 1 *Social Currents* 189 (2014).

Employment discrimination and accommodation complaints received by CAIR-California in 2014:

Case Category	Number	Percentage
Hiring	9	8.7%
Hostile Work Environment/Harassment	24	23.1%
Religious Dress & Grooming Accommodation	10	9.6%
Other Religious Observance Accommodation	13	12.5%
Retaliation/Wrongful Termination	33	31.7%
Other	15	14.4%
Total	104	100%

Hani Khan

Following a United States District Court ruling that Abercrombie & Fitch violated Title VII when they fired Hani Khan for wearing *hijab*, CAIR-California's Civil Rights Team took continued action to challenge systematic employment discrimination in both the court of law and the court of public opinion.

In 2014, the University of California's Berkeley School of Law's "Asian American Law Journal" published an article written by three CAIR-California attorneys entitled "The Changing Face of the American Worker."⁵ The presence of the article and of Hani's story in a legal resource will hopefully inspire many other American Muslim workers to speak up and push back against discriminatory employment practices and encourage more legal professionals to take on cases of religious discrimination against American Muslims.

Also in 2014, CAIR-California partnered with the Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center to help Hani file an amicus brief in connection with a United States Supreme Court Case also involving Abercrombie & Fitch.⁶ In the brief, Hani and her attorneys argue that Title VII's religious accommodation provisions are crucial to prevent American Muslims from feeling humiliated and depressed in the American workforce and that employers are tasked with ensuring American Muslim employees are not harassed or subjected to disparate treatment in their workplaces.

⁵ Rachel Roberts et al., *The Changing Face of the American Worker*, 21 Asian American Law Journal 209 (2014).

⁶ See Brief for Umme-Hani Khan as Amicus Curiae Supporting Petitioner, *E.E.O.C. v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores, Inc.*, No. 14-86, (U.S. Dec. 19, 2014).

Law Enforcement Abuses

Right to be Free of Dishonest & Discriminatory Practices that Damage Community Trust



Michael German speaking to several hundred attendees at the Muslim Community Association of the San Francisco Bay Area in Santa Clara.

In April 2014, CAIR-California hosted a series of community workshops with Michael German, a sixteen-year federal law enforcement veteran and a fellow with the Brennan Center for Justice’s Liberty and National Security Program. Before joining the Brennan Center for Justice, Mr. German served as the policy counsel for national security and privacy for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Washington Legislative Office.

In his workshops with attorneys, civil rights advocates, and American Muslim community members and leaders, Mr. German expressed his concerns over the FBI’s current antiterrorism tactics. He discussed how, instead of dedicating resources to investigating actual criminal terrorist activity, the FBI spends a great deal of time in widespread information gathering and undercover sting operations that infringe on American Muslims’ constitutional rights and are an ineffective means of actually preventing future terrorist attacks. These questionable FBI practices have also received widespread media attention.⁷

For years CAIR-California has undertaken measures to help the American Muslim community stand up against such discriminatory law enforcement practices. CAIR-California representatives constantly hold KYR workshops at mosques and community centers across the state that empower community members with knowledge of their rights not to speak with law enforcement and to have an attorney present should law enforcement demand an interview. In addition, CAIR-California attorneys provide absolutely free of charge legal representation should a community member choose to sit with law enforcement for a voluntary interview.

Requests for federal law enforcement voluntary interviews most commonly come from FBI agents, non-FBI law enforcement officials working with the FBI on the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agents. These interviews often focus on an individual’s political activities and opinions, religious beliefs and practices, employment, and social connections—the interviews are almost never connected to an actual criminal investigation.

⁷ See, e.g., Trevor Aaronson, *The Sting: How the FBI Created a Terrorist*, *The Intercept* (Mar. 16, 2015), <https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2015/03/16/howthefbicreatedaterrorist>.

FBI Overreach

In addition to the discriminatory practices of the FBI against the American Muslim community, dishonest and inappropriate individual interactions with the American Muslim community further damage community trust with federal law enforcement.

In May 2014, two brothers awoke one morning to find an FBI card on their front door. The card contained language insinuating that the FBI was performing a security clearance background check in response to a federal job application. However, when a CAIR-California attorney contacted the FBI agent to inquire further, it was discovered that the agent was attempting to question the brothers in response to a Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) regarding some recent purchases they made, their country of origin, and their family business overseas.⁸ When the CAIR-California attorney informed the agent that the brothers did not wish to speak to him directly after learning of the real reason for his inquiry, the agent seemed shocked and confused as to why these brothers and other American Muslim community members are losing trust in their federal law enforcement officials.

In October 2014, while a gentleman was at work two FBI agents visited his home and asked his wife questions about him and his family. They asked the woman if her husband believed in an originalist version of Islam, if her husband engaged in jihad, if she and her husband allowed their kids to play with other non-Muslim kids in the apartment complex, and asked about the local Imam. The regional FBI Special Agent in Charge was dismissive in response to an inquiry by a CAIR-California attorney as to why such inappropriate questions were asked and expressing concern over how such inappropriate interrogations damage community trust with the FBI.

⁸ The Nationwide SAR Initiative is a vast expansion of the federal government's domestic intelligence network. Under the SAR initiative, local law enforcement offices, intelligence and homeland security officials, emergency responders, and even private citizens become the "eyes and ears" of the federal government by reporting "suspicious" activities potentially related to terrorism. Yet many such activities—such as using binoculars, taking pictures, drawing diagrams, and taking notes—are either innocuous or protected by the First Amendment. The SAR initiative therefore increases the probability that innocent people will be stopped by police and have their personal information collected for inclusion in law enforcement and intelligence databases. See Asian American Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus et al., *Suspicious Activity Report: What They Are and How they Are Impacting Our Communities* (2014), https://ca.cair.com/sfba/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/SARS_pamphlet.pdf.

To make matters worse, the SAR initiative opens the door to racial and religious profiling. Allowing law enforcement agencies to collect information about people and behavior that someone deems "suspicious" gives officers authority to harass practically anyone they choose. The unsurprising result is surveillance and monitoring of communities, particularly Muslims and communities of color, based on race, religion, or involvement in political protest activities. For more information on SARs, visit <http://bit.ly/acluSARs> or <http://bit.ly/alcSARs>.

CAIR-California strives to build positive and meaningful partnerships with city and county law enforcement agencies to help them better serve their American Muslim communities. But on occasion these local law enforcement agencies engage in actions that blur the line between local and federal law enforcement, and potentially amount to excessive force.

Safe San Francisco

Several years ago CAIR-California and multiple other partner civil rights organizations helped pass the “Safe San Francisco Ordinance,”⁹ (the Ordinance) placing strict limitations on the San Francisco Police Department’s (SFPD) involvement with the FBI on the JTTF. CAIR-California undertook this effort because it believed that local law enforcement agencies should be focused on local law enforcement issues and not providing their services to discriminatory federal law enforcement practices.

Despite the Ordinance, in June 2014, Mr. Sarmad Gilani was visited at his workplace by an FBI agent and an SFPD inspector working on the JTTF. They were not there to investigate actual criminal activity, instead they asked Mr. Gilani questions regarding his constitutionally protected activities, such as his political opinions on international events, his filing a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with the government,¹⁰ and his overseas visits to family in Pakistan.¹¹

In early 2015, CAIR-California worked with several partner community organizations to file an official complaint against the SFPD alleging that its practice violated the Ordinance and other SFPD orders.



Mr. Sarmad Gilani’s encounter was featured as a cover story in “The Examiner.” © Photo by SF Examiner.

⁹ S.F., Cal., Administrative Code § 2A.74(b) (2015).

¹⁰ “The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a law that gives you the right to access information from the federal government. It is often described as the law that keeps citizens in the know about their government.” *Freedom of Information Act: Learn*, FIOA.gov, <http://www.foia.gov/about.html> (last updated Jan. 2011).

¹¹ Exercising speech through political opinions, petitioning the government by filing a FOIA request, and associating with others through travel, are all protected activities under the United States Constitution’s First Amendment. U.S. Const. amend. I; *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People v. Alabama*, 357 U.S. 449 (1958).

Mohammad Moneeb

In March 2014, Mohammad Moneeb and his family were coming home on a weekday afternoon when they were surrounded by dozens of Santa Clara police officers and vehicles in front of their driveway. Several family members were forced to the ground while police officers armed with assault rifles, riot shields, and a battering ram forced their way into the home. Once inside, officers rummaged apart rooms and took photos of Islamic related items and Arabic calligraphy art.

The Santa Clara Police Department claims the search was for a missing video camera worth less than \$500. A camera which the family already denied having during a midnight home visit a month earlier by Santa Clara police officers who entered their home without a warrant and which the police never found.

Charges against the community member were eventually dismissed and he has filed a lawsuit against the Santa Clara Police Department for violating his constitutional rights.



Mohammad Moneeb (left), his criminal defense attorney Daniel Mayfield (center), and CAIR-SFBA Executive Director Zahra Billoo (right), at a press conference discussing the dismissal of Mr. Moneeb's criminal case.

Law enforcement related complaints received by CAIR-California in 2014, which amount to an over 20% increase compared to 2013:

Case Category	Number	Percentage
FBI Voluntary Questioning	63	51.6%
State & Local Law Enforcement	29	23.8%
General Concerns	30	24.6%
Total	122	100%

Travel

Right to Travel Free from Racial & Religious Profiling

Perhaps the most widespread and pervasive government infringement on American Muslims' civil rights occurs at our nation's airports and ports of entry.¹² These violations occur at the hands of DHS agents working under the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) or Customs and Border Protection (CBP), both of which work closely with the FBI. While the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) revised their racial profiling guidelines in December 2014 to bar racial discrimination by federal law enforcement agencies, the revisions specifically allow the TSA and CBP to opt-out of them—the DOJ explicitly grants these agencies the authority to continue engaging in racially biased discrimination and harassment.¹³

A vast amount of American Muslims, especially those of Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian national origin, are selected for secondary questioning or enhanced screenings based on their national origin or religious beliefs. This is especially the case when returning into the country from abroad at which point American Muslims are commonly pulled into back rooms for extra questioning and searches of their belongings against their will, including computers and cellular devices.

By their own regulations, CBP agents are limited to asking questions regarding a traveler's most recent trip, their citizenship status, and any objects they are bringing back into the country for the first time. But CAIR-California receives numerous reports of CBP agents asking community members about past travels, their political opinions, their religious beliefs and practices, and their social networks and families.

Despite a holding by the United States Supreme Court that United States citizens have an "unqualified right to enter the country,"¹⁴ CAIR-California receives reports that community members who assert their right not to answer inappropriate questions are held by CBP agents for excessive periods of time.

¹² A port of entry is any place designed by the President, the Secretary of the Treasury, or Congress, at which CBP officers are stationed to accept entries of persons and merchandise into the country and enforce Customs laws. See 19 C.F.R. § 101.1.

¹³ U.S. Department of Justice, *Guidance for Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Regarding the Use of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, National Origin, Religion, Sexual Orientation, or Gender Identity* (Dec. 2014), available at <http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ag/pages/attachments/2014/12/08/use-of-race-policy.pdf>.

¹⁴ United States citizens are entitled "to the full protection of the United States, to the absolute right to enter its borders, and to full participation in the political process." *Tuan Anh Nguyen v. INS*, 533 U.S. 53, 67 (2001).

In April 2014, CAIR-California received a call from the family of a community member who was held in CBP detention for over seven hours. The gentleman was only released once a CAIR-California attorney began calling the CBP holding area demanding his release into the country.

On occasion CBP will punish community members by holding them for just long enough to force them to miss connecting flights or outbound flights if they are being held at a CBP preclearance checkpoint abroad. In December 2014, a CBP agent at a preclearance checkpoint threatened a community member with making her miss her flight if she did not answer his inappropriate questions. When she stood her ground and refused to sacrifice her civil rights, the agent followed through on his threat and she was stranded abroad until she was able to board a flight leaving the next day.

While traditionally TSA and CBP justified these selections as “random,” it has become widely known that such selections are commonly the result of a community member’s placement by the FBI on one of the federal watch lists.¹⁵ Once on these watch lists, there is little a community member can do to figure out how or why they were placed on the list or how they can be removed.

The DHS commonly directs community members to submit Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (TRIP) complaints to resolve these issues,¹⁶ and while this is a necessary step in the resolution process, CAIR-California has found this to mostly be a futile exercise.¹⁷ As such, CAIR-California’s Civil Rights Team is currently exploring other ways to challenge the legitimacy and legality of these programs.

¹⁵ In a ground breaking 2014 case, a Northern District of California federal judge explained in detail federal watchlist placement procedures:

The government maintains a web of interlocking watchlists, all now centered on the Terrorist Screening Database (“TSDB”). . . . The Terrorist Screening Center (“TSC”) is a multi-agency organization administered by the FBI. . . . The TSC manages the Terrorist Screening Database. . . . FBI agents and other government employees normally nominate individuals to the TSDB. . . . For each nominee, the TSDB calls out which particular watchlists the nominee should be on and which he or she should not be on. It is a box-check procedure, then computerized. There are several watchlists affected by the TSDB, namely: the no-fly list (“TSA”) [and] the selectee [“SSSS”] list (“TSA”) When persons are placed on the no-fly list or any other watchlist, they receive no formal notice of such placement and may never learn of such placement until, if ever, they attempt to board a plane or do any other act covered by the watchlist.

Ibrahim v. Dep’t of Homeland Sec., No. C 06-00545 WHA, at 7-8 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 14, 2014).

¹⁶ Department of Homeland Security, *Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP)*, dhs.gov (Apr. 13, 2015), <http://www.dhs.gov/dhs-trip>.

¹⁷ In April 2015, the DOJ announced in several federal court filings that it revised its TRIP process. These revisions allow persons on the no-fly list to receive confirmation of such placement after going through the TRIP process and claim to allow those persons additional opportunities to administratively contest their placement on the list on a case-by-case basis. See Steven Aftergood, *No Fly List: Govt Offers New Redress Procedures*, FAS: Federal of American Scientists (Apr. 14, 2015), <https://fas.org/blogs/secrecy/2015/04/no-fly-redress/>. Because these revisions are so recent, their real world impact has yet to be seen. Moreover, they do not address persons placed on the SSSS list, the most widespread form of systematic discrimination experienced by American Muslim travelers.

Global Entry Program



Travelers using Global Entry Program kiosks. © Photo by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

In 2014, CAIR-California offices were approached by numerous community members who applied for admission into the CBP's Global Entry Program.¹⁸ These community members were either denied admission without adequate justification or initially admitted only to eventually have their admission revoked without adequate justification. CAIR-California's Civil Rights Team began filing appeals on these denials and revocations and is currently exploring further advocacy efforts to ensure such actions are not undertaken arbitrarily because of the applicant's Islamic faith.

Travel related complaints received by CAIR-California in 2014:

Case Category	Number	Percentage
Airlines	3	6.1%
Customs & Border Protection ("CBP")	29	59.2%
Transportation Security Administration ("TSA")	17	34.7%
Total	49	100%

¹⁸ "Global Entry is a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) program that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States. Participants may enter the United States by using automated kiosks located at select airports." Department of Homeland Security, *About Global Entry*, [cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov/global-entry/about), <http://www.cbp.gov/global-entry/about> (last visited Apr. 28, 2015).

Other Government Agencies

Outside of the FBI and DHS, other government agencies and actors are responsible for both isolated and widespread American Muslim civil rights abuses. One of the more egregious examples is the State Department's systematic targeting of American Muslims of Yemeni national origin for such things as passport revocations.

In 2013, "Khaled," a naturalized American Muslim from Yemen, was in Sana'a applying for his son's passport. When he went to the United States embassy, he was taken to a back room and interrogated for hours by a State Department agent. The agent accused Khaled of using a false name, which Khaled vehemently denied.

During the interrogation the State Department agent told Khaled if he did not sign a statement confessing to using a false name, Khaled would face terrorist charges, go to jail, both his passport and citizenship would be revoked, and his son's passport application would be denied. With his family waiting at the embassy for over seven hours, including his sick child, Khaled finally surrendered his passport and signed the statement under fear of safety for both himself and his family.

After being stranded in Yemen for almost eleven months, CAIR-California requested Khaled receive a limited validity travel document in order to return to the United States. Upon his return to the United States, he endured an extended interview at the border and had his travel document revoked, thus permanently separating him from his family back in Yemen, including a developmentally disabled United States citizen daughter.

A CAIR-California attorney has been directly assisting Khaled for over a year now, including making several appearances in Washington, D.C. for State Department hearings in order to advocate for the reinstatement of his illegally revoked passport.

The civil rights abuses of Yemeni American citizens has become so widespread that a coalition of civil rights and community organizations submitted a report to the United States Human Rights Network for review by the United Nations in Geneva.¹⁹ The report alleges that multiple American citizens have been subjected to coercive interrogations and have had their passports revoked without proper due process.

In 2014, CAIR-California received sixteen complaints regarding discrimination from various non-law enforcement agencies.

¹⁹ Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus et al., *Stranded Abroad: Shadow Report on Coercive Interrogations and Due Process Violations in the Confiscation or Revocation of Passports of American Citizens of Yemeni Origin* (July 11, 2014), available at http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/USA/INT_CERD_NGO_USA_17797_E.pdf.

Immigrants' Rights

Right to Pursue Legal Status in the Land of the Free

In March 2014, CAIR-California formally announced the formation of CAIR-LA's Immigrants' Rights Center (IRC) which provides outreach, consultation, application assistance, and legal representation to non-citizens seeking guidance on immigration matters. The decision to launch the center came in response to the high number of immigration-related requests CAIR-California received by persons in need of legal assistance who could not afford private legal representation. As a result, CAIR-California endeavored to provide greater accessibility to immigration services to help non-citizens gain independence, security, and the opportunity to fully participate in American society.

Immigration cases handled by CAIR-LA's IRC in 2014:

Case Category	Number	Percentage
Detention & Deportation	2	1.3%
Asylum	42	26.8%
Immigration/Adjustment of Status	16	10.2%
Naturalization or Citizenship Preparation	28	17.8%
Petition for Alien Relative	20	12.7%
T Visa	1	0.6%
Temporary Protected Status (TPS)	4	2.6%
U Visa	2	1.3%
Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)	1	0.6%
Other	41	26.1%
Total	157	100%

As part of its outreach efforts, IRC held two naturalization workshops to help legal permanent resident community members apply for citizenship. It also conducted four information sessions aimed at educating the general public on the requirements and process of naturalization.

First Year IRC Highlights



CAIR-LA Immigrants' Rights Attorney Farida Chehata sharing some of her clients' stories at a community gathering.

A young Syrian man arrived at the United States-Mexico border after months of travel through Europe and South America. He fled his home because of extended detention and torture by government officials. IRC helped the young man understand his options and advised him on the best course of action to take when claiming immigration relief. IRC's attorney represented him before the Executive Office for Immigration Review, helped him prepare his asylum application, assisted him with getting medical and counseling services, and registering for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

After learning that their father was diagnosed with a terminal illness, three siblings submitted visitor visa applications to their local embassy in hopes of receiving visas to visit their father in the United States. Their applications were denied. Desperate to see their ailing father, they reached out to IRC, inquiring as to whether IRC could do anything to advocate on their behalf. IRC's attorney appealed to a local congresswoman for support and resubmitted applications with supporting letters and evidence. An expedited interview was scheduled, and all three siblings received visitor visas to the United States.

Hate Incidents

Enjoying a Peaceful Life Free from Hate-Motivated Encounters



CAIR-SV Executive Director Basim Elkarra (center) holds a press conference discussing the murder of Hassan Al-Awsi in a Home Depot parking lot with California State Senator Dr. Richard Pan (middle left) and Hassan's sister Sajida Al-Awsi (far right) also in attendance.

In 2014, there was a dramatic rise in the reports of Hate Incidents and Islamophobia. In the prior year, CAIR-California's offices received 63 complaints of hate incidents and instances of Islamophobia. In 2014, that number nearly doubled to 115. Unfortunately this rise is not surprising.

Islamophobia is not a new concept and is closely tied to Orientalism, a way of viewing persons from North Africa and Middle Eastern societies as exotic, backwards, uncivilized, dangerous, and incompatible with western society.

Today this dangerous climate is continually perpetuated by Islamophobic groups that produce hate-filled anti-Muslim propaganda²⁰ and legacy news networks that only discuss Islam in the context of a few horrific radical extremist groups abroad, yet rarely provide the counter narrative of the millions of American Muslims who live peacefully in the United States and elsewhere around the world.²¹

²⁰ See Matthew Duss et al., *Fear, Inc. 2.0: The Islamophobia Network's Efforts to Manufacture Hate in America*, Center of American Progress (2015), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/report/2015/02/11/106394/fear-inc-2-0/>.

²¹ In a recent editorial opinion, Dr. Mohamed Elmasry from the University of North Alabama wrote:

Many scholars—including Edward Said, Elizabeth Poole, Kai Hafez, Milly Williamson, Karim Karim, Teun Van Dijk, Kimberly Powell, and Dina Ibrahim, among others—have carried out academic studies examining western news coverage of Islam and Muslims. Results suggest that Muslims are often portrayed in western news media as violent, backwards, fundamentalist and as threats to western civilisation. Western news coverage rarely highlights Islam except to show its possible relation to some atrocity, and Muslims are rarely mentioned in the context of news that is positive or benign. Several studies have found that Muslims are portrayed as a homogenised body, lacking diversity and difference, with other analyses showing that news coverage of violent conflicts in the Muslim-majority world ignores context and circumstances, implying that Muslims are inherently violent and prone to conflict.

Unfortunately, due to this climate of negativity and media bias against Muslims, a growing number of people are engaging in acts of hate against their American Muslim neighbors. These acts of hate take many forms. The following are just a few examples of hate incidents targeting American Muslims:

A man was shopping at Home Depot with his sister who wears *hijab* to purchase gardening supplies. Another gentleman began stalking him through the store's aisles and eventually followed him out into the parking lot. As the man was attempting to load his purchases into his car, his stalker came up behind him and killed him by firing two gunshots into his head. The killer was apprehended by authorities in a neighboring county and was prosecuted for the murder.

A woman was driving home following dinner with her family when passengers in an adjacent vehicle started cursing at and threatening her because she was wearing *hijab*. The adjacent vehicle's driver passed her at a high rate of speed, merged in front of her, and began braking aggressively, apparently attempting to cause the woman and her family to rear-end the vehicle. The family reported the incident to local police. While there was insufficient evidence to make an arrest, local police still visited the vehicle owner's residence to follow up on the report.

A young woman, her family, and some friends just finished dinner at a local Thai restaurant and were walking back to their cars. While the young woman and her father were walking in the parking lot along a sidewalk, a car with several young men pulled up to them, shouted a derogatory slur at her, and threw garbage and dirty underwear at her before speeding off.

Hate incident complaints received by CAIR-California in 2014:

Case Category	Number	Percentage
Hate Incident	24	20.9%
Hate Mail/Email/Fax/Call	60	52.1%
Vandalism	3	2.6%
Islamophobic Media	17	14.8%
Assault	11	9.6%
Total	115	100

Community Responds to Hateful Advertisements

In 2014, San Francisco MUNI busses continued to be plagued by anti-Muslim bus ads attempting to spread hate within the San Francisco community.

CAIR-California is deeply concerned about these ads. However, despite their deplorable content, they remain protected by the First Amendment's Free Speech clause which prevents a challenge against them under the law. Instead, CAIR-California and numerous other partner organizations have asserted their First Amendment rights and work closely with the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (Board) and Mass Transit Authority (MTA) to find creative ways to counter the ads.



Artwork displaying Ms. Marvel covering up a hateful ad on an SF MUNI bus.
© Photo by NBC News.

Towards the end of 2013, the MTA opted to donate some of the money generated by these advertising placements to the Human Rights Commission,²² and in November 2014, the Board unanimously passed a second resolution condemning and expressing their disgust with the ads.²³

San Franciscans further displayed their opinion of these hate-filled ads by pushing back in their own way. Bay Area Art Queers Unleashing Power (BAAQUP) and Street Cred claimed responsibility for covering up the ads with drawings of Ms. Marvel as they were sick and tired of the climate of hate and Islamophobia anti-Muslim groups were attempting to create in their city.²⁴

²² Aaron Sankin, 'Savage' Muni Ad Backlash Leads San Francisco Transit Agency to Donate Ad Proceeds to Charity, Huffington Post (Aug. 20, 2012 11:03 EDT), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/15/savage-muni-ad_n_1784930.html.

²³ S.F. Board of Supervisors Res. 0413-14 (Ca. 2014), available at <http://www.sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/resolutions14/r0413-14.pdf>.

²⁴ Frances Kai-Hwa Wang, *Comic Heroine Ms. Marvel Saves San Francisco from Anti-Islam Ads*, NBC NEWS (Jan. 27 2015, 12:58 PM), <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/comic-heroine-ms-marvel-saves-san-francisco-anti-islam-ads-n294751>.

Public Accommodation

Right to Enjoy Community Spaces & Services

In April 2014, several CAIR-California offices along with UNITED SIKHS filed official complaints with the DFEH under the Unruh Civil Rights Act against “Boomers!” amusement parks. These complaints were grounded in the amusement park’s policy to not accommodate American Muslim women who wear *hijab*, or Sikh men who wear turbans, who wanted to ride the go-kart rides.

In the prior summer, 13-year-old Noorah Abdo attended the amusement park with her family and friends. When she attempted to ride the go-karts she was turned away because of her *hijab*. The amusement park’s policy at the time prohibited people with religious headwear from riding its go-karts and mocked such headwear as a fashion trend.

For almost six months, CAIR-California and UNITED SIKHS attorneys attempted to negotiate with the amusement park organization to reach an accommodation that would ease the organization’s safety concerns and allow Muslims and Sikhs to ride the go-karts without having to take off their religious headwear. When the organization refused to cooperate and abide by the law, the only option left was to move forward with filing a complaint with the DFEH.

California’s Unruh Civil Rights Act specifically outlaws public accommodation discrimination based on, among others, sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, or sexual orientation.²⁵ The law applies to almost all public and private institutions, including hotels, restaurants, stores, and amusement parks.²⁶



Noorah Abdo (middle-left) and CAIR Northern California Civil Rights Coordinator Brice Hamack (middle-right) speak about the public accommodation complaint at a press conference alongside members from the Sikh community at CAIR-SFBA’s office in Santa Clara.



CAIR-LA Senior Civil Rights Attorney Fatima Dadabhoj (left), then CAIR-LA Civil Rights Coordinator Sammar Miqbel (center), and Fatimah Zanana (right) speak about the public accommodation complaint at a press conference at CAIR-LA’s office in Anaheim.

In 2014, CAIR-California received 48 public accommodation complaints. This is a stark increase from the thirty complaints received in 2013.

²⁵ Cal. Civ. Code § 51 (2015).

²⁶ California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, *Unruh Civil Rights Act*, [ca.gov, http://www.dfeh.ca.gov/Publications_Unruh.htm](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov/Publications_Unruh.htm) (last visited Apr. 28, 2015).

Schools & Higher Education

Right to Seek Knowledge in a Hate-Free Environment

CAIR-California continues to emphasize the importance of monitoring school bullying and accommodation issues.

CAIR-California Civil Rights Team members conducted numerous workshops across California. In these workshops CAIR-California representatives interacted with American Muslim youth and educated them on their school's duty to protect them from bullying and provide reasonable religious accommodation.²⁷ The youth who attended these workshops were also asked to complete surveys similar to the 2012 surveys used to compile CAIR-California's first-of-its-kind study on the challenges facing American Muslim youth in schools.²⁸ The findings of these surveys will be released within the next year.



CAIR Northern California Civil Rights Coordinator Brice Hamack giving a presentation on how students can stand up to bullying at the West Valley Muslim Association in Saratoga.

American Muslim youth and their parents complained to CAIR-California about verbal taunting, social isolation and ostracizing, and even physical acts such as pulling headscarves. Even more disheartening were complaints of teacher harassment and discrimination in which teachers taught Islam with a negative bias or joined in the teasing and taunting of American Muslim youth.

²⁷ Cal. Educ. Code §§ 234-234.5, 32261-32262, 32265, 32270, 32282, 32283 (2015); 42 U.S.C. § 2000d (2014).

²⁸ See Fatima Dadabhoy et al., Council on American-Islamic Relations-California, *Growing in Faith: California Muslim Youth Experiences with Bullying, Harassment & Religious Accommodation in Schools* (2014), available at <http://ca.cair.com/downloads/GrowinginFaith.pdf>.

School Concert

In November 2014, a group of students was planning to perform Islamic *dhikr*—the repeated recitation of Islamic phrases or prayers—as part of a school concert featuring other religious and spiritual based music and performances. After receiving a complaint, the school removed the *dhikr* from the program, yet retained other religious based programming. Through the efforts of students, parents, teachers, and CAIR-California the matter was reported by the media, and the school reinstated the *dhikr* into the program.



CAIR-SD Executive Director Hanif Mohebi discusses civil rights issues on KPBS San Diego.

In addition to bullying and accommodation complaints from the state's K-12 schools, CAIR-California also received complaints from higher education students. These complaints primarily involved students facing accommodation issues when trying to pray on campus and students having their free speech rights restricted due to campus policies or pressure from outside influences attempting to chill political speech.

School and higher education complaints received by CAIR-California in 2014:

Case Category	Number	Percentage
School Accommodation	6	13.6%
School Bullying	8	18.2%
School Teacher/Administration Issues	12	27.3%
Higher Education Accommodation & Discrimination	16	36.4%
Higher Education Free Speech	2	4.5%
Total	44	100

An Overview of 2014 Civil Rights Findings

In 2014, CAIR-California's offices received a total of 1136 complaints from community members. Below is a breakdown of these complaints:

Case Category	Number	Percentage
Criminal Defense	41	3.6%
Employment	104	9.2%
Family Law	57	5.0%
FBI & Law Enforcement	122	10.7%
Federal Crimes Scam	54	4.8%
Hate Incidents & Islamophobia	115	10.1%
Higher Education Issue	19	1.7%
Housing Discrimination	17	1.5%
Immigration	220	19.4%
Mosque Construction Issues	4	0.4%
Other	176	15.5%
Other Government Agency	16	1.4%
Prison	21	1.8%
Public Accommodation	48	4.2%
Referrals	47	4.1%
School Bullying/Accommodation	26	2.3%
Travel	49	4.3%
Total	1136	100%

Of these 1136 complaints, 715 fell within the scope of CAIR-California's civil rights work. This includes complaints related to employment discrimination, FBI and law enforcement, hate incidents and Islamophobia, higher education, housing discrimination, mosque construction, other government agency discrimination, prisons, public accommodation, school bullying and accommodation, and travel. It also includes immigration complaints to CAIR-LA's Immigrants' Rights Center and naturalization delay complaints to all CAIR-California offices.

Several of the in-scope issues not discussed previously in this report are:

Prisons

Incarcerated American Muslims in state prisons and county jails reach out to CAIR-California about religious accommodation issues and mistreatment by correctional officers. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA) provides that the government may not impose a substantial burden on the religious practice of an inmate unless it demonstrates that the burden is: (a) in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest and (b) is the most narrowly tailored means of achieving that interest.²⁹ California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's policies also allow inmates access to meals that comply with religious dietary restrictions, religious garb, and religious articles.³⁰

Mosque Opposition & Land-Use

CAIR-California occasionally receives complaints from community members facing opposition when attempting to establish local mosques, and such opposition usually involves unjust or unfair application of land use laws. RLUIPA, in addition to protecting the religious rights of prisoners, protects against discrimination from city, county, and state officials in regards to land use applications.

Housing Discrimination

Title VII and FEHA, discussed earlier in the employment discrimination context, also protect American Muslims against discrimination when applying for housing. Occasionally impacted individuals will contact CAIR-California with housing discrimination issues such as denied rental applications and other discriminatory landlord-tenant practices.

California Regions with Most Complaints

Case Category	Number
Orange County	215
Los Angeles County	170
Santa Clara County	144
Greater San Diego Area	98
Alameda County	91
Riverside County	44
San Bernardino County	34
San Francisco County	26
Contra Costa County	23
San Mateo County	14

²⁹ Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA), 42 U.S.C. § 2000cc-1 (2014).

³⁰ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 15 § 3050 (Apr., 15 2015), available at http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Regulations/Adult_Operations/docs/Title15-2015.pdf.

Recommendations

How the Community Can Prevent & Push Back Against Civil Rights Abuses

In order to advance the civil rights of all communities, and in light of the complaints received in 2014, CAIR-California's Civil Rights Team recommends that:

1. Employers provide comprehensive diversity and employee rights trainings to their employees, including training on American Muslims, Title VII, and FEHA, and that employers take swift and stern action against employees who engage in discriminatory or harassing behavior against their co-workers.
 2. Employers create a workplace environment where employees feel both empowered to speak out internally against discrimination and harassment in the workplace and confident they will receive protection from such behavior and not retaliation.
 3. Employees facing potential discrimination immediately contact their local Human Resources department and report the potentially discriminatory behavior, preferably via e-mail to maintain written records, and contact an organization such as CAIR for advice and consultation.
 4. Local law enforcement agencies continue to provide their officers with proper cultural competency trainings to ensure that they are equipped to navigate interactions with the American Muslim community and to avoid targeting American Muslims as suspicious due to prevailing negative media images about them and their community.
 5. Law enforcement agencies at both the local and the federal level further commit to retraining those officers who have attended biased trainings in the past or who have discriminatorily targeted American Muslim community members.
 6. All Americans educate themselves on their rights when dealing with law enforcement and when traveling and assert their rights when approached for FBI or DHS voluntary questioning or when subjected to enhanced questioning and screening procedures while traveling.
 7. Schools provide comprehensive diversity training to their administration and faculty, as well as training on how to properly respond to bullying under California and federal law.
 8. Schools, especially higher education institutions, not infringe on American Muslim students' free speech expressions of religious and political views on issues affecting the American Muslim community or international events affecting Muslim majority populations abroad.
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Partners

CAIR-California would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who have been instrumental to the success of our civil rights work and continue to contribute for the advancement of civil rights for all Americans.

Abrahamic Faiths Peacemaking Initiative	LA Jews for Peace
ACCESS California Services and ACCESS Sacramento	Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
American Civil Liberties Union	League of United Latin American Citizens
American Muslim Voice	Legal Aid Foundation Los Angeles
Arab Culture and Community Center	Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center
Arab Film Festival	Los Amigos of Orange County
Arab Resource and Organizing Center	Muslim American Society
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus	Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles	Muslim Legal Fund of American
Bay Area Muslim Bar Assoc.	Muslim Public Affairs Council
Bill of Rights Defense Committee	Muslim Student Association West
Brennan Center for Justice	Nat. Assoc. for the Adv. of Colored People – LA
Buchalter Nemer	National Lawyers Guild
California Community Foundation	National Religious Campaign Against Torture
California Council of Churches/California Church IMPACT	Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress
California Immigration Policy Center	North American Islamic Shelter for the Abused
California Sikh Council	Orange County API Community Alliance
Carpenter & Mayfield	Orange County Bar Assoc. Charitable Fund
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.	Orange County Congregation Community Organization
Center for Constitutional Rights	Orange County Human Relations Commission
Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law	Pangea Legal Services
Church State Council	Program for Torture Victims
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice	Progressive Christians Uniting
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights Los Angeles	Project Islamic Hope
Dr. Hatem Bazian	Rights Working Group
Immigrant Youth Coalition	San Francisco Human Rights Commission
Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace	Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Interfaith Worker Justice	South Asian Bar Assoc.
Islamic Circle of North America	South Asian Bar Assoc. of Northern California
Islamic Networks Group	South Asian Network
Islamic Shura Council of Southern California	The Sikh Coalition
Japanese American Citizens League	United Sikhs
Jewish Voice for Peace	Western Justice Center Foundation
Kizuna	Women For: Orange County

This report and CAIR-California's civil rights efforts were made possible in 2014 through support from the California Bar Foundation, the Orange County Bar Association Charitable Fund, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and numerous individual American Muslim donors.

Appendix

Glossary of Common Terminology, Laws, & Entities

Islamic Terminology

Allah - The most commonly used linguistic term for “God” in Arabic. Allah is the same monotheistic God of Abraham worshiped by Christians and Jews.

Beards - Many devout Muslim men grow beards in observance of the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Eid - Islamic holiday occurring twice a year. Eid al-Fitr is the holiday celebrating the end of Ramadan on the first day of the tenth lunar month of the Islamic Calendar. Eid al-Adha is celebrated on the tenth day of the twelfth lunar month of the Islamic calendar, commemorating the end of Hajj in Mecca, Saudi Arabia every year.

Hajj - The fifth pillar of Islam. It is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and every able-bodied and financially capable Muslim must perform Hajj at least once in their lifetime.

Halal - Permissible by Islamic law.

Hijab - Modest clothing that many Muslims choose to wear in public. It is most often comprised of loose-fitting clothes and a head covering.

Imam - A prayer leader.

Jihad - The Arabic term to describe “struggling” or “striving.” In an Islamic sense it has many meanings, and can refer to internal and external efforts to be a better Muslim.

Kufi - A cap worn by some Muslim men.

Masjid - The Arabic word for “mosque” – an Islamic house of worship.

Niqab - A face veil.

Prayer - The second pillar of Islam. Islam mandates structured prayers five times a day. Muslims are also required to attend a weekly congregational prayer every Friday. Some Muslims believe they are required to pray every prayer in congregation. During the month of Ramadan many Muslims also observe extended evening prayers called Taraweeh.

Quran - The revealed text and holy book of Islam.

Ramadan - The Islamic holy month of fasting and the ninth lunar month of the Islamic calendar.

Relevant State & Federal Laws

1st Amendment - Part of the United States Constitution's Bill of Rights, the First Amendment provides that the government cannot interfere with a person's freedom of speech, freedom of expression, or freedom to peacefully practice his or her religious beliefs.

4th Amendment - Part of the United States Constitution's Bill of Rights, the Fourth Amendment provides that government officials cannot unreasonably detain persons or search them, their belongings, automobiles, or homes without a warrant.

5th Amendment - Part of the United States Constitution's Bill of Rights, the Fifth Amendment provides that no person shall have to give information to the government if it would possibly incriminate them. The Supreme Court of the United States in *Miranda v. Arizona* provided that this includes the right to remain silent in the face of law enforcement questioning and the right to have an attorney present if compelled by law enforcement to provide information.

6th Amendment - Part of the United States Constitution's Bill of Rights, the Sixth Amendment provides that all persons facing government criminal proceedings be allowed the right to a jury trial and the assistance of an attorney.

APA - The Administrative Procedure Act. The APA is a federal law governing the way in which United States administrative agencies may establish and carry out federal regulations.

FEHA - The California Fair Employment and Housing Act. FEHA is a state law outlawing employment and housing discrimination based on, among other factors, gender, national origin, race, or religion.

INA - The Immigration and Nationality Act. The INA is a federal law governing immigration and citizenship in the United States.

RFRA - The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993. RFRA is federal law protecting against federal laws that substantially burden a person's free exercise of religion. It provides increased protections on top of the First Amendment.

RLUIPA - The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. RLUIPA is federal law protecting against state laws that substantially burden a prisoner's right to worship and gives religious institutions a way to avoid burdensome zoning law restrictions on their property use.

Seth's Law - "Seth's Law" is a piece of California legislation bolstering and strengthening the SSVPA by implementing increased requirements on schools in regards to bullying policies and investigations.

SSVPA - The School Safety Violence Protection Act. The SSVPA is a California law requiring schools to develop and implement policies that protect students from bullying.

Title VII - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII is part of a landmark federal law outlawing employment and housing discrimination based on, among other factors, gender, national origin, race, or religion.

Unruh - The Unruh Civil Rights Act. Unruh is a California law outlawing public accommodation discrimination based on, among other factors, gender, national origin, race, or religion.

Relevant State & Federal Entities

Attorney General - In the state of California, the Attorney General's office is responsible for ensuring that the laws of California are uniformly and adequately enforced. The Attorney General's office also represents the state of California in legal actions brought against the State or its agencies.

CBP - United States Customs and Border Protection. A component of DHS, CBP is responsible for regulating and facilitating international trade, collecting import duties, and enforcing United States regulations, including trade, customs, and immigration.

District Attorney - The District Attorney's office is a county agency responsible for prosecuting violations of the California Penal Code on behalf of the people of California.

DFEH - The Department of Fair Employment and Housing. The DFEH is a state agency responsible for investigating and prosecuting violations of California's FEHA and Unruh Civil Rights Act. Before a person can bring a private lawsuit under FEHA, they must first file an official complaint with the DFEH.

DHS - The Department of Homeland Security. The DHS is a federal executive department of the United States Government and is responsible for protecting the United States from and responding to terrorist attacks, man-made accidents, and natural disasters.

DOJ - The United States Department of Justice. The DOJ is a federal executive department of the United States Government and is responsible for enforcing federal laws.

EEOC - The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The EEOC is the federal agency responsible for investigating and on occasion prosecuting violations of Title VII. Before a person can bring a private lawsuit under Title VII, they must first file an official claim with the EEOC.

ICE - United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement. A component of the DHS, ICE is responsible for identifying, investigating, and dismantling vulnerabilities regarding the nation's border, economic, transportation, and infrastructure security.

FBI - The Federal Bureau of Investigation. A government agency within the DOJ, the FBI is responsible for investigating federal criminal activity and intelligence gathering.

TSA - The Transportation Security Administration. A component of DHS, the TSA is responsible for the security of the traveling public in the United States.

U.S. Attorney - United States Attorney Offices are federal counterparts to state District Attorney Offices. They prosecute federal crimes and represent the United States federal government in United States district courts and United States courts of appeal.

USCIS - United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. A component of the DHS, USCIS is responsible for processing immigrant visa petitions, naturalization petitions, and asylum and refugee applications, as well as adjudicating certain immigration matters.

Our Vision

To be a leading advocate for justice and mutual understanding.

Our Mission

To enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.



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