

CAIR-LA

**CIVIL
RIGHTS
REPORT**

2010 - 2012

The **Council on American-Islamic Relations** (CAIR) is the largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. CAIR is headquartered in Washington D.C. and has chapters in more than 20 states.

For questions about this report or to obtain copies, contact:

Council on American-Islamic Relations
Greater Los Angeles Area
2180 W. Crescent Avenue, Suite F
Anaheim, CA 92801

Tel: 714.776.1177

Fax: 714.399.4588

E-mail: cairlacivilrights@cair.com

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Executive Summary

The data compiled for this report was collected by the Greater Los Angeles Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-LA) in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

In 2010, CAIR-LA received 403 complaints from members of the American Muslim community. The number of complaints was 340 in 2011, and 338 in 2012. Accordingly, 1,081 civil rights complaints were taken in by the CAIR-LA office between 2010 and 2012, and of those 114 fell out of the scope of CAIR-LA's work and were categorized as "General" complaints.

Los Angeles Area Muslims reported incidents in which they were singled out for scrutiny by law enforcement agencies, perceived discrimination from co-workers and supervisors on the job, harassed verbally or in a few instances, assaulted physically, and subjected to intensive searches and delay while traveling. Individuals also reported difficulties in obtaining immigrant visas for family members and delays in adjustment of immigration status. Incidents took place in various locations, including airports, the workplace, schools and private businesses.

Law enforcement complaints, including voluntary questioning by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and community members concerned about the possibility of law enforcement surveillance, made up the bulk of CAIR-LA's complaints in all three years. They numbered 89 cases, or 22% of all cases in 2010; 71 cases and 21% of all cases in 2011; and in 2012, 70 cases were reported at 21% of all cases received that year.

The next most frequent type of complaint received involved employment discrimination complaints, either involving religious accommodation issues in the workplace, hostile working environment or a negative job action after registering a complaint of discrimination. Employment cases accounted for 57 or 14% of calls received in 2010. They consisted of 64 cases and 19% of all cases received in 2011. In 2012, employment cases accounted for 55 cases at 16% of total reports received.

In 2010, the third most frequent category of cases involved hate mail and hate phone calls amounted to 40 cases and 10% of the calls received. In 2011 and 2012, immigration cases became the third most frequent category. In 2011, immigration cases accounted for 30 cases, 9% of the total reported, and in 2012 they accounted for 23 cases at 9% of the total cases received.

The remainder of the calls received involved complaints about family disputes, school bullying and accommodation, higher education, criminal defense, public accommodation, prison, and housing/land use issues.

Definitions & Categorization¹

A. Hate Crime

A hate crime is a criminal offense committed against a person, property, or society that is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against the victim's race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin. Examples of hate crimes include: vandalizing a mosque or place of worship, an office of a religious organization, or person's property; desecrating a religious symbol or property with the intent to terrorize; acts of violence against or verbal harassment towards a person due to their perceived race, ethnicity, religion or any other protected areas.

B. Hate Incident

A hate incident is any action that is motivated by bias but does not constitute a crime. The First Amendment usually guarantees and protects these actions, as long as they do not interfere with another person's civil rights. A common example of a hate incident is the distribution of non-threatening racist flyers.

C. Employment Discrimination

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act prohibit discrimination by an employer against employees on the basis of religion, race, sex, or national origin, and also provides employees with reasonable religious accommodations at the workplace.² An example of an employment-related incident may occur when a female is not hired for employment or is terminated due to wearing the *hijab*, or the Islamic headscarf.

1. **Reasonable Religious Accommodation:** An employer must reasonably accommodate an employee's religious beliefs and practices, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship for the employer or the union. Examples include permitting an employee to keep a beard for religious reasons despite a general "clean shaven" requirement, or allowing a worker to use a lunch break to attend the obligatory Friday prayer in congregation at a mosque.
2. **Hostile Environment:** Hostile work environment is either speech or conduct that is severe or pervasive enough to create a hostile or abusive work environment.³ Such harassment is based on race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or in some jurisdictions, sexual orientation, political affiliation, citizenship status, marital status, or personal appearance. An employer must ensure that its employees are not subjected to anti-religious insults, harassment or any unwelcome and excessive proselytizing.
3. **Retaliation:** Sometimes, when an employee has complained about discrimination, he or she will face retaliatory action from his or her employer. This retaliation can take the form of, among other things, cutting the employee's hours, a reduction in pay, a demotion, or termination.
4. **Wrongful Termination:** An employer may not terminate an employee on account of that employee's race, national origin, religion, gender or age. Likewise, if an employer retaliates against an employee who has complained of discrimination by firing the complaining employee, this violates the law and the employee has the right to sue.

¹ The case categories below have been updated and revised from the 2009 report. The 2008 report is available at: ca.cair.com/download.php?f=/downloads/2009_California_Civil_Rights_Report_Final.pdf

² Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC § 2000e-2(a) (1) & (2); California Government Code Sections §12900 - 12966.

³ *Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc.*, 510 U.S. 17, 21-22 (1993).

D. FBI Visits and Interactions with Law Enforcement

1. **Voluntary Questioning:** CAIR-LA receives many complaints from community members who have been approached by the FBI for voluntary questioning. These interactions usually consist of law enforcement agents from the FBI, Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), or another agency visiting the community member at his or her home or office to ask broad-based questions. These interactions almost never result in criminal charges, indicating the extent to which American Muslims are subjected to law enforcement scrutiny without reasonable suspicion of terrorist or even criminal activity.
2. **Surveillance Concerns:** CAIR-LA also receives complaints from community members who have never been approached for voluntary questioning but who fear that they are being followed or targeted. CAIR-LA documents these cases to shed light on the subjective effect of broad-based law enforcement investigations and profiling on community members.
3. **Law Enforcement Police Misconduct:** When community members accuse law enforcement agents of excessive force, insensitive treatment or other violations of department policies, this is categorized as a complaint about law enforcement misconduct. These complaints can arise during a traffic stop or after a report of suspicious activity. Community members who have been the subjects of suspicious activity reporting have, on some occasions, been subjected to additional law enforcement scrutiny.

E. Government and Immigration Issues

Citizenship Delay: Federal law states that the government must grant or deny a citizenship application within 120 days after the passing of the naturalization test. Many individuals that placed reports in this category have been waiting up to three years for a decision regarding their completed naturalization application.

F. Prisons

CAIR-LA often receives complaints from Muslim inmates in prison about religious accommodation and mistreatment from prison personnel.

1. **Religious Accommodation:** 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 1) in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest and 2) is the most narrowly-tailored means of achieving that interest. California law and the official policies of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation also allow inmates access to meals that comply with religious dietary restriction, religious garb, and religious articles.
2. **Misconduct by Prison Guards and Prison Staff:** Occasionally, CAIR-LA receives complaints about behavior from guards and prison personnel which violates correctional policy and the civil rights of inmates. Complaints from inmates about this misconduct are categorized this way.

G. Travel

Community members contact CAIR-LA on a regular basis to file complaints about the treatment they receive at the airport, both when they travel domestically and internationally. Cases involving excessive delays at the border, questioning about protected First Amendment activities, regular selection for secondary screening, and mistreatment from Transportation Security Administration (TSA) or airline personnel are categorized here.

H. Public Accommodation

According to the Unruh Civil Rights Act, all residents of the state of California are entitled to equal access to places of public accommodation, including restaurants, clubs, retail shops, and other businesses. When members of the Muslim community are denied access to places of public accommodation, their complaints are categorized here.

I. Islamophobic Media

Occasionally, CAIR-LA receives complaints from members of the community who have viewed or read content in the media which they deemed offensive to Islam or Muslims. In most instances, the First Amendment protects the offensive speech and CAIR-LA will only take action when it can be effective to enhance public understanding of Islam. However, CAIR-LA documents these incidents as they can be instructive in understanding community attitudes and reactions to portrayals of Islam and Muslims.

J. K-12 Schools and Higher Education

- 1. School Bullying:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines bullying as “unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.”⁴ California has especially stringent protections against bullying in general and biased-based bullying in particular. When Muslim youth report instances of teasing at school, pulling of headscarves, and ostracizing or physical violence from their peers, their complaints are categorized as school bullying.
- 2. Discrimination:** CAIR-LA also receives complaints from community members about teachers harassing, or treating their children differently because of their religion or ethnicity. Teachers may inappropriately express their opinions relating to Islam and Muslims in the classroom and, as a result, marginalize Muslim students. They may also fail to give Muslim students an opportunity to correct misinformation about Islam. Similarly, in the higher education setting, professors may treat Muslim students differently and deans may fail to follow up on complaints made by Muslim students.
- 3. Accommodation:** CAIR-LA is often contacted by parents and students on how to appropriately request accommodation for prayer and holidays. Other accommodations may include religious clothing and leaving school to attend *jumu'ah*, Friday prayer. Schools are generally required to accommodate such requests.

⁴ “Bullying Definition,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s StopBullying.gov, accessed September 28, 2013, <http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/definition/index.html>

Findings

In 2010, CAIR-LA received a total of 403 complaints from members of the community. Of the 403 complaints, 29 fell outside the parameters of this report, as they were not concerned with civil rights, including complaints from individuals seeking referrals to attorneys in matters unrelated to civil rights. These 29 complaints are categorized below as “General –Other.” In 2011, CAIR-LA received a total of 340 complaints from members of the community, 33 of which fell outside the parameters. Finally, in 2012, CAIR-LA received a total of 338 complaints from members of the community. Of the 338 complaints, 52 fell outside the parameters and were categorized as “General – Other.”

Table 1. Cases by Type of Alleged Abuse

Categories	2010	2011	2012
Criminal Defense	5	8	6
Employment	57	64	55
Family Law	9	8	16
General-Other	29	33	52
Hate Crime/ Hate Incident / Vandalism	22	17	15
Hate Mail / Fax /E-mail/ Phone Calls	40	13	11
Higher Education	8	10	10
Immigration	38	30	23
Islamophobic Media	13	10	6
Landlord Tenant / Housing / Land Use	5	11	12
Law Enforcement and FBI Encounters	89	71	70
Other Government Agencies	15	11	15
Prison	16	10	15
Public Accommodation	6	13	9
School Bullying /Teacher Harassment / Accommodation	13	18	7
Travel Issues	38	13	16
TOTAL	403	340	338

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Case Type in 2010

2010

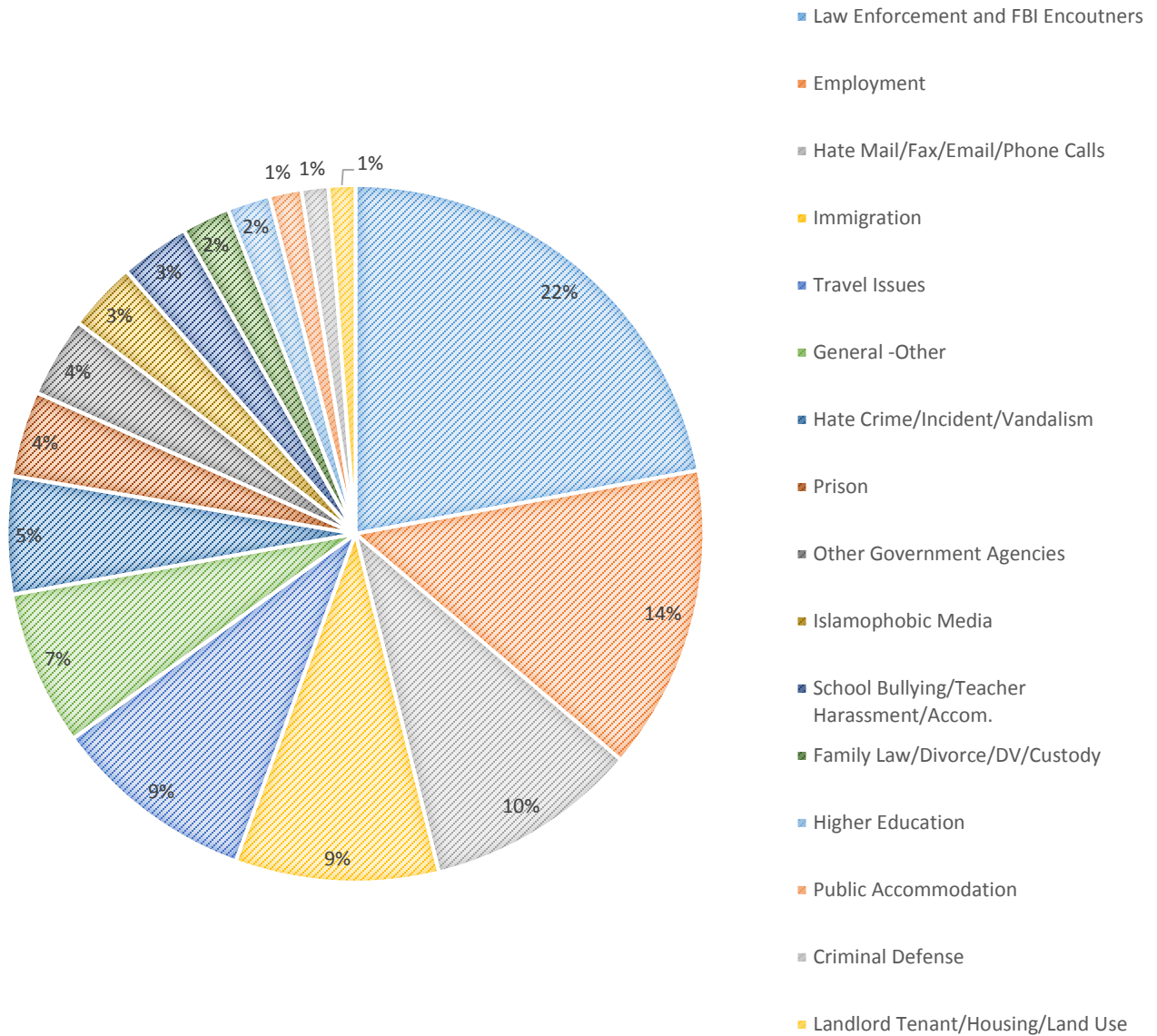


Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Case Type in 2011

2011

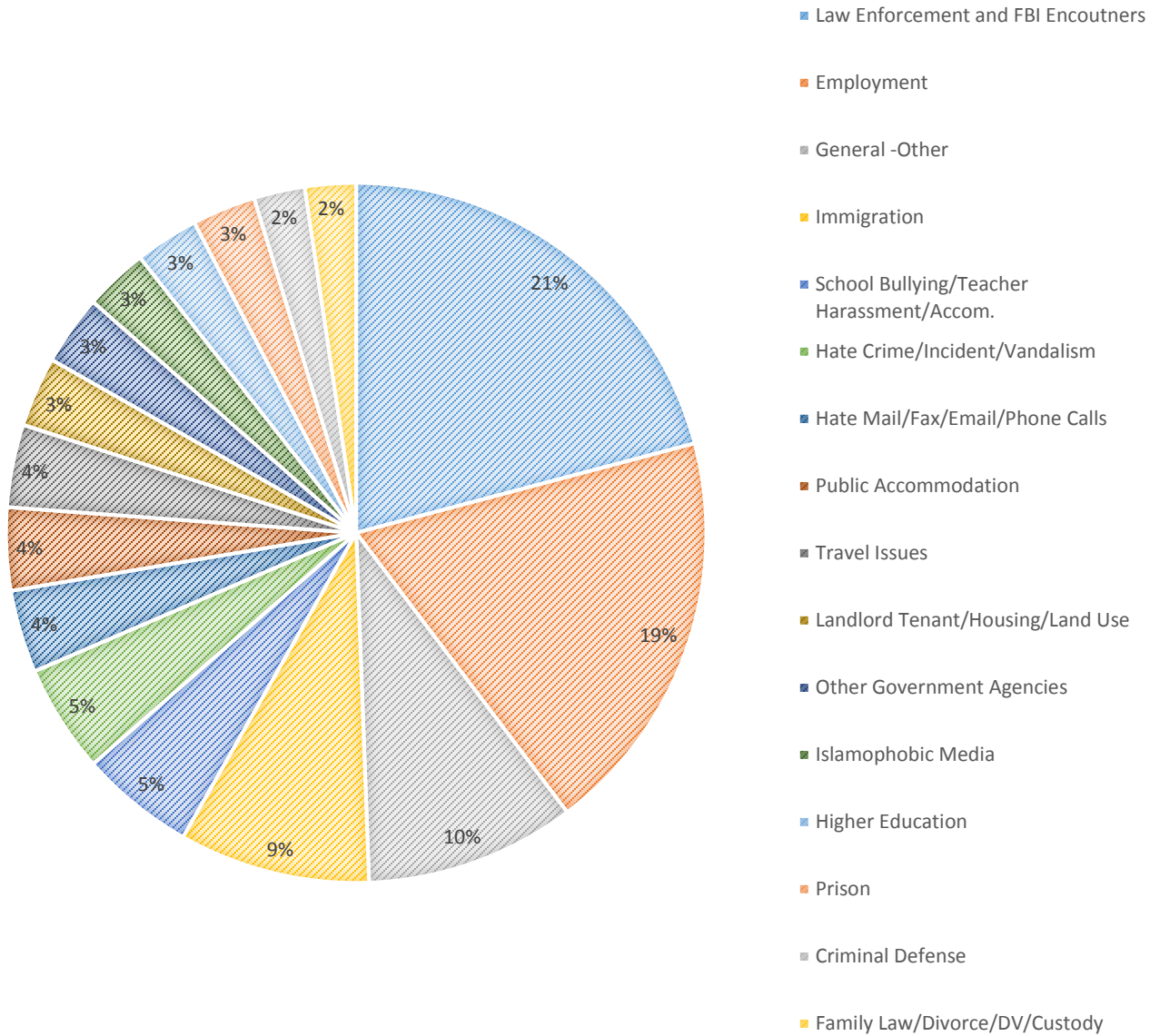
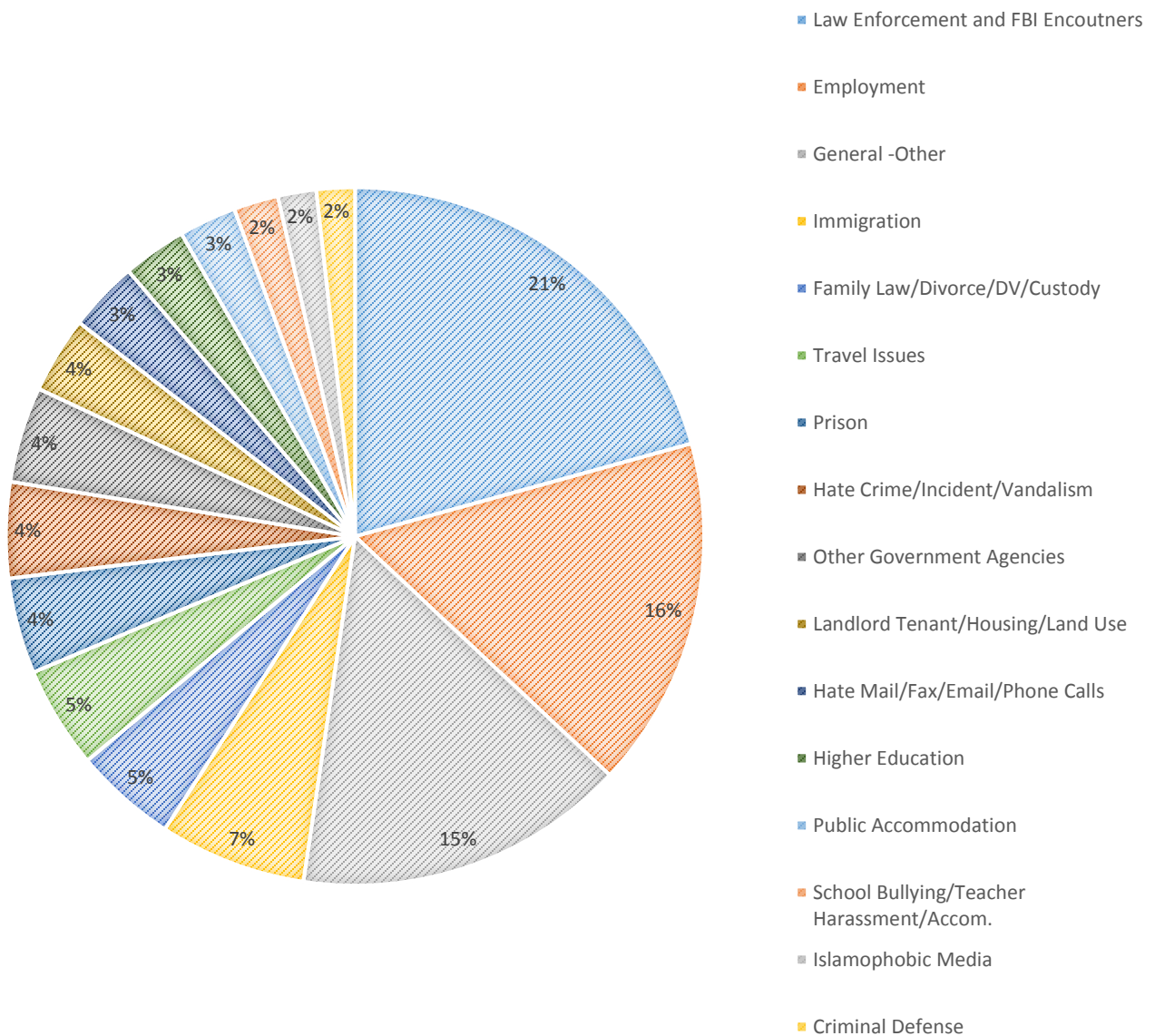


Table 4. Percentage Distribution of Case Type In 2012

2012

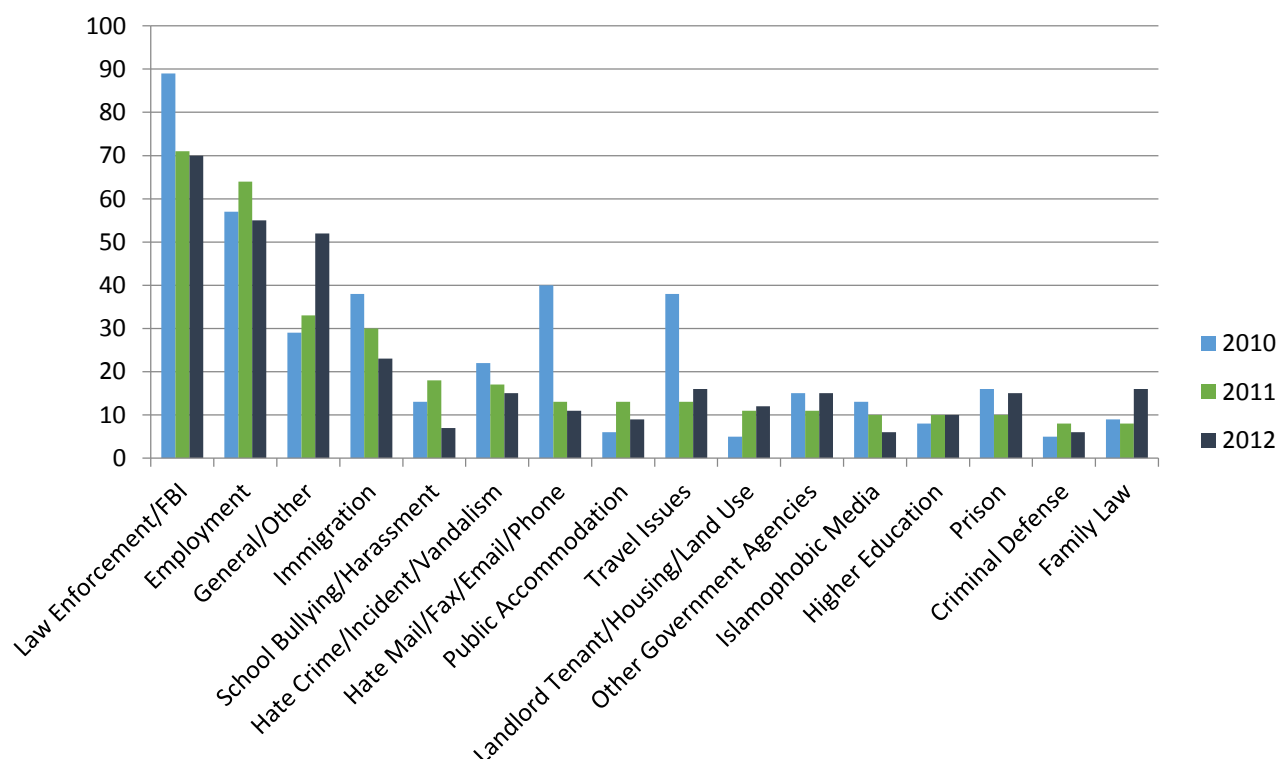


2010, 2011 and 2012 Comparison

The overall total number of cases reported to CAIR-LA decreased from 403 in 2010 to 340 in 2011, then to 338 in 2012. One reason is a significant drop in reports of hate mail, emails, faxes and phone calls. In 2010, CAIR-LA received 40 reports of this type whereas in 2011, CAIR-LA received only 13 reports of this type. The decrease in reports is because, in 2010, the majority of the hate mail was triggered and targeted towards those who were involved in the case of 11 students from the University of California, Irvine who were suspended after protesting the Israeli ambassador on campus, also known as the “Irvine 11” case. Additionally, there were a significantly lower number of reports of travel issues and travel delays in 2011.

Despite the decrease in the number of complaints, there was an increase in certain categories from 2010 to 2011. In 2011, the reports of complaints involving employment and workplace issues increased by 5 percent. The number of reports involving school-related issues including higher education also showed a slight increase from the previous year. The biggest increase came from complaints involving public accommodation and landlord-tenant/housing issues. Both these categories had more than double the number of cases reported from the previous year. From 2011 to 2012, the number of reported cases concerning employment issues and school bullying/harassment decreased; however, reported cases relating to travel, prison, government agencies and family law all increased along with inquiries for cases that fell out of the civil rights parameters. Consequently, the case count between 2011 and 2012 remained steady.

Table 5. Case Comparison by Year



FBI Visits and Interactions with Law Enforcement

The majority of complaints reported to CAIR-LA by community members are related to law enforcement concerns. This category includes complaints by individuals who:

- Were approached by the FBI for voluntary questioning;
- Expressed concern about surveillance or targeting; and
- Claim misconduct by the police due to profiling, a report of suspicious activity or use of excessive force.

The largest number of complaints received in this category involved complaints about the FBI.

Table 6: FBI Visits and Interactions with Law Enforcement

Subcategory	2010	2011	2012
FBI	58	45	37
Law Enforcement Concerns & Surveillance	8	9	6
Police Misconduct	23	17	27
Total Cases	89	71	70

Employment and Workplace

Complaints about employment and the workplace remain the second largest category of reports to CAIR-LA. A plurality of complainants alleged facts that would amount to a hostile work environment, usually from co-worker harassment about terrorism, politics or religion. A large number of complainants also alleged that they were retaliated against through negative job actions or through wrongful termination after complaining to supervisors about discrimination. Several complainants alleged that they experienced hiring discrimination or a refusal to accommodate their *hijab* or religiously-mandated beard. The remainder of the complainants in this category came from individuals who believed that they had been discriminated against, but who were unable to allege discriminatory facts. This category also includes those who alleged a violation of employment law not related to discrimination, such as a worker's compensation issue or wage and hour disputes.

Table 7: Employment and Workplace

Subcategory	2010	2011	2012
Beard	1	2	2
Harassment	20	20	24
Hijab	7	4	3
Hire/Fire	15	21	14
Other	8	8	10
Prayer	2	8	1
Religious Accommodation	4	1	1
Total Cases	57	64	55

Hate and Islamophobia

In 2010 hate incidents comprised the third largest type of case reported to CAIR-LA. While these cases decreased in subsequent years, they continue to make up a substantial number of cases reported. The category of calls reporting assaults include reports by individuals who had been called terrorists and then pushed, spit on and/or threatened. The category of vandalism consisted of vandalism that occurred at mosques as well as personal property, such as homes and vehicles. Most of the hate incidents are instances of hate speech that did not rise to the level of a criminal threat or assault.

Table 8: Hate and Islamophobia

Subcategory	2010	2011	2012
Assaults	8	6	5
Hate Mail/Email/Fax	40	23	11
Hate Speech/Incident	5	9	6
Islamophobic Media	13	10	6
Vandalism	9	2	4
Totals Cases	75	50	32

Immigration

Immigration-related concerns accounted for the third largest majority of cases in 2011 and 2012. The most common type of reports received in this category included naturalization issues, and several reports related to extended citizenship delays with no explanation or reason given from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Many of these applicants had completed their interview and were waiting to schedule their oath ceremony. The next most frequent type of complaints were related to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and deportation proceedings. CAIR-LA also received reports of visa delays and other general immigration issues.

Table 9: Immigration Issues

Subcategory	2010	2011	2012
ICE	8	9	7
USCIS- Naturalization	17	11	6
USCIS- Permanent Resident	5	3	3
USCIS-Other Issues	8	7	7
Total Cases	38	30	23

Travel

Complaints of travel issues included individuals who were mistreated at the airport while traveling both internationally and domestically. CAIR-LA also received complaints of excessive delays during search and questioning, regular selection for secondary screening, and cases involving community members who had been placed on the no-fly list and were denied boarding. The majority of the complaints involving Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) involved excessive delays and detainments at land and sea borders and airports, and questioning about protected First Amendment activity.

Table 10: Travel Issues

Subcategory	2010	2011	2012
Airport	17	6	4
CBP	15	4	9
TSA	6	3	3
Total Cases	38	13	16

School

Within the category of school-related issues, the majority of complaints involved higher education, including community colleges, state and public universities, as well as private colleges. Complainants reported hate speech, Islamophobic remarks and harassment by professors, as well as religious accommodation issues. The remaining reports relating to school issues involved K-12 students. CAIR-LA received complaints of bullying, in which many students reported being called terrorists by their classmates. In addition to bullying, CAIR-LA received complaints of teacher harassment and denial of religious accommodation at school.

Table 11: School Issues

Subcategory	2010	2011	2012
Accommodation	3	3	2
Bullying By Peers	6	7	3
Higher Education	8	10	10
Teacher Harassment	4	8	2
Total Cases	21	28	17

Case Highlights

Henderson 7

On December 20, 2009, seven men were stopped by police officers after performing Islamic evening prayers in the parking lot of a shopping center in Henderson, Nevada. The men were questioned for about an hour and told to sit on the curb in 40 degree Fahrenheit weather, after which they were released without formal arrest. The seven men were on a road trip when they were stopped. CAIR-LA's Deputy Director and Staff Attorney Ameena Mirza Qazi, has dubbed these men the "Henderson 7."

After eating in the shopping center, the seven men prayed next to their vehicle. The officers approached them because of a civilian report of "suspicious behavior." After being arduously questioned, the police officers admitted that they were not trained well enough to know how to respond to Muslim religious behavior and they were released without formal arrest.

In June of 2010, the FBI was still wrongly questioning five of the seven Muslim men in Los Angeles about praying in the shopping center parking lot in southern Nevada over six months earlier. Qazi was concerned that federal investigators still thought the men detained last December by Henderson police were "plotting something or were some sort of suspicious group."

FBI spokeswoman Laura Eimiler in Los Angeles said that the men were interviewed by FBI agents "to clarify routine reports of suspicious activity" and that "none of the men have been accused of wrongdoing."

Qazi stated that "the concern is that they [the men] are continuing to be penalized for asserting their First Amendment rights." The "Henderson 7" had the First Amendment right of free exercise of religion and freedom of Assembly.

Qazi called it "absurd" that the men continued to face government scrutiny, and was concerned that FBI agents showed one of the men a book with information on war tactics, titled "Afghanistan." Henderson police found two such books during the December search of the men's vehicle. Qazi said the man had no knowledge of the book and that it was not in the vehicle. The CAIR-LA official also said that the Henderson police lieutenant handling the CAIR-LA complaint told her that he had no information about police obtaining the books during the December incident.

This case brought national attention to the issue of suspicious activity reporting and biased law enforcement trainings, and has even been featured in such reports as Political Research Associates' "Manufacturing the Muslim Menace."

Fazaga v. FBI

On August 8, 2011, attorneys representing Muslim Americans, who were illegally spied on by the FBI, responded to a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) request to dismiss their lawsuit that claimed that the suit would require the government to divulge state secrets.

The motion was filed by CAIR-LA, the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California (ACLU/SC), and the firm of Hadsell, Stormer, Keeny, Richardson & Renick LLP (HSKRR). It requested that the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California not review secret evidence filed in support of the DOJ's motion to dismiss the FBI suit until the court has ruled on whether the state secrets doctrine can properly be invoked in the case.

The DOJ's decision to invoke the state secrets privilege to dismiss the suit against the FBI's unlawful infiltration of mainstream mosques in Southern California is unprecedented. Attorney General Eric Holder filed a declaration as part of the DOJ request - a move that would prevent the FBI from explaining its actions regarding broad surveillance of the Orange County mosques and targeting Muslim Americans solely because of their religion.

The groups filed *Fazaga v. FBI* in February 2011. The lawsuit sought injunctive relief on behalf of all those targeted by the FBI agents and their informant by requiring the FBI to turn over or destroy all information collected through the discriminatory investigation, as well as requesting damages for emotional distress for the plaintiffs Sheikh Yassir Fazaga, Ali Malik, and Yassir Abdel Rahim.

The lawsuit alleged that during 2006 and 2007, the FBI collected extensive records about the day to day religious practices of members of various Los Angeles area mosques, including detailed records about which members attended daily prayers and hundreds of hours of video and audio recordings of discussion groups, prayers, religious lectures and social and cultural events at various mosques. Many of those targeted were American citizens. In more than five years since the investigation began, the surveillance led to criminal charges against only one individual, which prosecutors ultimately dismissed.

No-fly List

A young man, who is a U.S. citizen, had been wrongfully placed on the No-fly list and was unable to pursue his religious studies abroad for approximately two years. As a result of CAIR-LA's intervention with the Department of Homeland Security, the young man was able to fly for the first time in almost two years. He emailed us as he was getting ready to board his flight saying, "Thank You Thank You Thank You!!!! I'm at gate 9, and going to board very soon.... I'm indebted to you and CAIR [for your] help."

Islamic Center of South Bay v. City of Lomita

In March 2012, CAIR-LA and the law firm of Hadsell, Stormer, Keeny, Richardson & Renick LLP (HSKRR) filed a law suit against the City of Lomita and City Council Members for their "unlawful" denial of the Islamic Center of South Bay's (ICSB) rebuilding application.

The complaint claimed that the city's actions violated the mosque and its congregants' rights to worship, assembly and expression under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), the U.S. Constitution, and the California Constitution.

The complaint alleged that ICSB had been “unable to renovate or unify its facilities into a single house of worship to accommodate the religious needs of the congregation, thereby substantially burdening the religious practice of ICSB’s congregants. Its facilities remain[ed] inadequate, resembling a refugee camp rather than a religious institution.” The mosque sought injunctive relief in the form of permitting its rebuilding to take place, as well as compensatory damages.

In March 2010, the Lomita City Council considered the mosque’s application to renovate and unify the 8 disjointed building into a single prayer space with increased parking and an indoor community hall for dining and meetings. The mosque’s dining area was located outdoors, covered by tarp. Mosque representatives worked with neighbors and city staff from 2008 to 2010 and repeatedly revised their application to mitigate neighbor and city staff concerns.

However, the City Council denied the mosque’s application, despite its recommended approval by the city’s Planning Commission, Public Safety and Traffic Commission and City planning staff. In denying the request, council members indicated concern over parking and traffic despite the City staff’s findings that the renovated facilities would improve parking and traffic flow. Council members also objected to the potential loss of tax revenue of re-zoning the mosque’s commercial lots to residential, despite the properties’ continual use as a religious facility since 1985. The city rezoned the properties in 1989 to commercial retail, precluding the mosque from rebuilding its facilities without a zone change.

Additionally, the US DOJ opened a civil rights investigation of the City’s decision to deny the mosque’s permit.

Recommendations

1. CAIR-LA recommends that the FBI and other law enforcement agencies take steps to ensure that all agents and officers are equipped with cultural competency training for working with the American Muslim Community. There have been numerous reports in which law enforcement agents have mistaken perfectly innocent behavior as suspicious activity because of lack of understanding and prevailing negative images of Muslims in the media. American Muslims are entitled to the same protection as other groups, and as such, law enforcement should commit to learning more about American Muslims to ensure they are taking informed action when they make decisions to protect the public safety. Law enforcement who have attended Islamophobic training sessions should be retrained.
2. Elected representatives and interfaith and community leaders must speak out against Islamophobia, especially when there are reported anti-Muslim incidents in their locales. Those who promote bigotry by targeting any faith or minority group should be repudiated by all Americans.⁵

⁵ Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), “Presumption of Guilt: The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States, 2007”, CAIR, 2007, p.6.

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3. Government agencies should initiate and support public anti-discrimination campaigns to raise awareness of the need to protect the rights of all people, including American Muslims. Their focus should be on building coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.
 4. In 2012, CAIR-California applauded the passage of State Assembly Bill 1964, which provides greater protection to employees seeking accommodation for religious practices. CAIR-LA encourages employers to inform themselves about religious accommodation issues that may affect their Muslim employees. In an effort to decrease the number of employment discrimination-related incidents, sensitivity trainings are recommended for employers to recognize and act in accordance with the rights of employees under the Title VII and its California state component, the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA). CAIR provides employers with several resources for learning what their obligations are during the course of the regular Muslim calendar and during Muslim holidays, such as Ramadan.
 5. Congressional inquiries and inspector general reports should be further implemented and used to ensure that the civil rights of all Americans are respected and protected. To ensure this, individuals should contact their congressional leaders and urge them to take action where necessary.
 6. CAIR-LA encourages American Muslim students and parents to report instances of school bullying. American Muslim students should learn their rights as students in school, in order to proactively respond to bullying and/or other issues that come up in the context of schools and religious discrimination. CAIR-LA provides sensitivity trainings to educators so that they are aware of various religious obligations and practices that Muslim students exercise, such as: the wearing of a *hijab* or *kufi*, adjusting students schedule to accommodate Friday prayers, and providing excused absences for religious holidays.
 7. Individuals affected by lengthy citizenship delays should contact CAIR-LA's Immigrant Rights Department in addition to their federal representative, and the Department of Homeland Security to address their delays. Lawsuits are another avenue for relief, but are only applicable to individuals who have passed their naturalization test and are waiting past the 120 day period for their oath ceremony.
 8. CAIR research reveals that prejudice decreases when people know more about Islam and when they personally interact with ordinary Muslims. American Muslims should outreach to their fellow Americans to enhance understanding of Islam. Holding interfaith events, open houses at mosques, or inviting friends and neighbors to dinner are some examples of how American Muslims can create opportunities to increase mutual respect and understanding.

Glossary of Islamic Terms

Allah	The most commonly used linguistic term for ‘God’ in Arabic. Allah is the same monotheistic God of Abraham worshipped by Christians & Jews.
Beards	Many devout Muslim men grow beards in observance of the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad.
Eid	Islamic holiday which occurs twice a year. Eid al-Fitr is the holiday celebrating the end of Ramadan on the first day of the 10 th lunar month of the Islamic calendar. Eid al-Adha , the most important Islamic holiday, commemorates 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 Muslim women choose to wear in public. Generally, it is loose-fitting clothes and includes a head covering.
Imam	A prayer leader.
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. During the month of Ramadan, many devout Muslims also observe extended evening prayers.
Quran	The reveled text and holy book of Islam.
Ramadan	The Islamic holy month of fasting and the ninth lunar month of the Islamic calendar.

Relevant California Civil Statutes

The Ralph Act – California Civil Code Sections 51.7 & 52

According to this law, a person has a civil right to be free of violence or a threat of violence, because of the person's race, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sex, age or disability. A violation of this law may allow the victim to bring an action for actual and punitive damages, injunctive and equitable relief and attorney's fees.

The Bane Act – California Civil Code Section 52.1

The Bane Act provides protection against any threats, intimidation, coercion or interference with a person's federal or constitutional rights. These constitutional rights include association, assembly, due process, education, employment, equal protection, expression, formation and enforcement of contracts, holding of public office, housing, privacy, speech, travel, use of public facilities, voting, worship and protection from bodily restraint or harm from personal insult, defamation, and injury to personal relations. A violation of this law may allow the victim to bring an action for actual and punitive damages, injunctive and equitable relief, and attorney's fees.

California Fair Employment and Housing Act

This law provides protection from harassment or discrimination in employment based on: Age (40 and over); Ancestry; Color; Religious Creed; Denial of Family and Medical Care Leave; Disability (mental and physical) including HIV and AIDS; Marital Status; Medical Condition (cancer and genetic characteristics); National Origin; Race; Religion; Sex and Sexual Orientation.

Relevant California Criminal Statutes

California Penal Code Section 422.6(a)

This section provides that it is unlawful to use force or the threat of force to willfully injure, intimidate, threaten or interfere with a person's state, federal statutory and constitutional rights because of the person's race, color, religion, national origin, gender or sexual orientation.

California Penal Code Section 422.7- Hate Crime Enhancement

According to this law, a misdemeanor crime can become a felony if it is based on the victim's race, color religion, national origin, gender or sexual orientation.

California Penal Code Section 11411

Under this section, it is a misdemeanor to display signs on the private property of another, for the purpose of terrorizing or in reckless disregard of terrorizing the owner or occupant. Also, it is a misdemeanor or a felony to place a racist symbol on that property on two or more occasions and it is a misdemeanor or a felony to burn or desecrate a cross or other religious symbol on private property, for the purpose of terrorizing or in reckless disregard of terrorizing the owner or occupant. Additionally, it is a misdemeanor or felony to burn or destroy a religious symbol on school grounds, for the purpose of terrorizing any person who attends, works, or is associated with the school.

For more information, contact



**Council on American-Islamic Relations
Greater Los Angeles Area (CAIR-LA)**

2180 W. Crescent Ave., Suite F
Anaheim, CA 92801

Tel 714.776.1847 | **Fax** 714.776.8340 | **Email** info@losangeles.cair.com