



12th Annual Muslim Day at the Capitol Legislative Meeting Script



Introduction from Group Leader/CAIR-CA Staff

Thank you **[Name of Elected Official/Staffer]** for taking this meeting. Our community is gathered today as part of the 12th Annual Muslim Day at the Capitol, organized by CAIR-CA, to discuss issues of importance to the California Muslim community.

CAIR is the nation’s largest Muslim civil liberties group, with 35 offices in the country. CAIR is a nonprofit organization that aims to protect civil rights, promote justice, and empower American Muslims.

Twelve years ago, at the first MDAC, we had 50 participants from all over California, and today, we have hundreds of community members meeting with elected officials across CA!

I want to give the group a chance to introduce themselves: **(name, region, organizational affiliation, and whether they are a constituent)**.

Purpose of the Visit **[POINT PERSON: most likely the group lead unless there is a volunteer]**

Our meeting today aims to discuss and get your support on three bills of crucial interest to the Muslim constituency in your district.

We are asking for your **YES** vote on each of these bills:

- **SB 309** – Religious Accommodation in Correctional Facilities
 - Introduced by Senator Cortese (kor-tez-ee)
 - Coauthored by Assemblymembers Reyes, Kalra
- **SB 461** – Religious or Cultural Observance for State Employees
 - Introduced by Senator Wahab
 - Coauthored by Senators Becker, Weiner, Smallwood-Cuevas, Cortese, Min, Skinner
- **AB 1503** – Excused Absence in K-12
 - Introduced by Assemblymember Lee

Discuss Each Bill

Bill #1: **[POINT PERSON: _____]**

SB 309 – Religious Accommodations in Correctional Facilities

1. **STATUS:** The bill passed the Senate Public Safety Committee without opposition, just passed Appropriations on Thursday, and is pending a floor vote.
2. **WHAT it does:**
 - a. SB 309 creates a statewide policy on religious clothing, headwear, and grooming for those incarcerated and in the custody of California’s prisons, jails, and other detention

facilities. This applies to state-run facilities, county, and private facilities. Right now, some counties allow religious clothing, headwear, and grooming while others don't – there isn't consistency throughout the state, leading to civil rights violations.

3. **WHY support?** (Storytelling: Be sure to note why this policy matters to you or impacts you or your family.)
 - a. The state of California has an incarceration rate higher than the United Kingdom, Portugal, Canada, France, Belgium, and Italy combined and is one of the largest sources of prisoner complaints in the country related to their right to practice their religion freely. CAIR-CA has represented Muslim women throughout the state who were stripped of their hijabs while in custody, with the counties involved changing their policies after the lawsuit. This bill is proactive, reduces litigation against the state, and ensures the civil rights of all Californians.
4. **The ASK:**
 - a. Senators:
 - i. Can we count on your office to vote yes on SB 309 on the Senate floor?
 - ii. We'd like to request your co-authorship of the bill alongside Senator Cortese and Assemblymembers Reyes and Kalra.
 - b. Assemblymembers:
 - i. Can we count on your office to support SB 309 when it comes to Assembly committees and the Assembly floor?
 - ii. We'd like to request your co-authorship of the bill alongside Senator Cortese and Assemblymembers Reyes and Kalra.

Bill #2: [POINT PERSON: _____]

SB 461 – Religious or Cultural Observance for State Employees

1. **STATUS:** The bill passed Senate Labor and Appropriations committees without opposition and is pending a floor vote.
2. **WHAT it does:**
 - a. SB 461 allows a state employee to use pre-existing eight hours of holiday credit towards time off for a holiday or ceremony of the state employee's religion, culture, or heritage. Last year, bills were passed which allowed state employees to take time off for days like Lunar New Year, Juneteenth, and Native American Day – this bill expands on that to include all religious and cultural observance.
3. **WHY support?** (Storytelling: Be sure to note why this policy matters to you or impacts you or your family.)
 - a. Despite the growing contributions and influence of American Muslims within the State, Californian Muslims have faced increased instances of hate and employment discrimination. Studies have shown that celebrating diversity limits the "other-ing" of religious & ethnic minorities and is one of the most effective ways to address instances of hate, discrimination, and bullying.
4. **The ASK:**
 - a. Senators:

- i. Can we count on your office to vote yes on SB 461 on the Senate floor?
 - ii. We'd like to request your co-authorship of the bill alongside Senators Wahab, Becker, Weiner, Smallwood-Cuevas, Cortese, Min, and Skinner?
- b. Assemblymembers:
- i. Can we count on your office to support SB 461 when it comes to Assembly committees and the Assembly floor?
 - ii. We'd like to request your co-authorship of the bill alongside Senators Wahab, Becker, Weiner, Smallwood-Cuevas, Cortese, Min, and Skinner?

Bill #3: [**POINT PERSON:** _____]

AB 1503 - Excused Absence in K-12

1. **STATUS:** The bill passed Assembly Education committee without opposition, just passed Appropriations on Thursday, and is pending floor vote.
2. **WHAT it does:**
 - a. AB 1503 will allow K-12 students to take one full day of excused absence time per semester for religious reasons. Right now, students are only given 4 hours per semester, which isn't enough time to celebrate all-day events and penalizes them for celebrating their religious background.
3. **WHY support?** (Storytelling: Be sure to note why this policy matters to you or impacts you or your family.)
 - a. 56% of Muslim students reported feeling unsafe in schools according to the latest CAIR-CA Bullying Report. This is the highest reported level since CAIR-CA began this report in 2013. Muslim students experience discrimination by both their peers and teachers, administrators, or other adults at the school. Like with SB 461, a bill celebrating and recognizing diversity in the American school system would confront Islamophobia and the "other-izing" of Muslims and religious minorities. AB 1503 also allows students to celebrate religious holidays without the risk of penalty or falling behind.
4. **The ASK:**
 - a. Senators:
 - i. Can we count on your office to support AB 1503 when it comes to Senate committees and the Senate floor?
 - ii. Can we count on your office to coauthor the bill alongside Assemblymember Lee?
 - b. Assemblymembers:
 - i. Can we count on your office to vote yes on AB 1503 on the Assembly floor?
 - ii. Can we count on your office to coauthor the bill alongside Assemblymember Lee?

Conclusion of the meeting

Next steps: [**POINT PERSON:** _____]

- a. **Thank you** for your time and we will follow up with you and email the fact sheets for all the bills discussed in our meeting.
- b. Can we take a photo with your office for our social media?

Wait for the elected official and staffer to leave before debriefing with the group and completing the [meeting survey!](#)