

March 7, 2011

Honorable Representative Peter King
Chairman House Homeland Security Committee
339 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative King:

We are organizations that support the fundamental American values of civil rights and civil liberties for all. We write to strongly object to the House Homeland Security Committee's plans to hold hearings on the "radicalization" of American Muslims. Our concern is that these hearings will serve to further promote the demonization and scapegoating of millions of American Muslims, while providing little valuable insight into the prevention of domestic terrorism.

While we all take the threat of terrorism seriously, we see no productive outcome in singling out a particular community for examination in what appears to be little more than a political show-trial. American Muslims, like all Americans, want to keep our country safe, and to cooperate with law enforcement when they are aware of criminal activity. Yet many elected officials have chosen to demonize all American Muslims, denigrating their religion and questioning their patriotism. We fear that these hearings will only add to this toxic climate of suspicion toward American Muslims and may hinder the important efforts to maintain trust and mutual respect between American Muslims, law enforcement, and public officials.

We commend your interest in exploring the roots of violent extremism, but we urge you to do so in a way that does not demonize millions of Americans for no reason but their faith.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
African American Ministers in Action
Alliance for Justice
American Humanist Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Americans United for Change
Appeal for Justice
Arab American Institute
Arizona Progress ACTION
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Center for Community Change
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Media and Democracy

Common Cause
Council on American-Islamic Relations - New York
Courage Campaign
CREDO
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
Equal Justice Society
Feminists for Free Expression
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Immigration Equality
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Funds for Justice
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Media Matters Action Network
Muslim Advocates
Muslim Consultative Network
Muslim Peace Coalition USA
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Jewish Women
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
New Security Action
New York Neighbors for American Values
NYC Coalition to Stop Islamophobia
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays National
People For the American Way
Physicians for Human Rights
Progressive Jewish Alliance
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Project Vote
Public Advocates Inc
Public Citizen
Secular Coalition for America
South Asian Americans Leading Together
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The Sikh Coalition
Truman National Security Project
WarIsACrime.org
Women of Reform Judaism

CC: Representative Bennie Thompson