



December 15, 2015

Dear Friends,

We write on behalf of the Jewish Community Relations Council, representing the voice of the organized Jewish community in the greater Milwaukee area. We are aware and concerned that this is an incredibly difficult and vulnerable time for American Muslims.

The heinous crimes of a few, combined with the fears of many, have moved some of the most prominent voices on the national stage to promote xenophobia, hatred and anti-Islamic vitriol. The recent suggestion by a presidential candidate that all Muslims be blocked from entering the United States, and the apparent support for this prejudiced and dangerously anti-American proposal, is evidence of a perilous new level of intolerance. We are deeply disturbed by this normalization of hate speech and believe it is critical that our communities stand in visible solidarity against the bigotry and intolerance that threaten to sweep away civility.

We are all profoundly concerned by the growth of extremist ideologies that have led a few to perpetrate horrific acts of terror. But in fighting terrorism we must also fight to preserve who we are as a society.

Islamophobia, along with anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry, is an affront to the core American values of inclusivity, pluralism and religious freedom. Yet, we now read daily of hatred and threats directed at mosques and individual Muslims across the country. The Jewish community knows all too well what can happen when a particular religious or ethnic group is singled out. Today we are witnessing a resurgence of an aggressive nationalist racism that, if allowed to flourish unchecked, could set us back years.

We reach out to you to express our concern and support for your community, and to reaffirm that we will stand shoulder-to-shoulder to promote religious freedom and a clear separation of church and state. We have also called on rabbis across Wisconsin, as our spiritual leaders, to reaffirm our community's commitment to acceptance of others and to include prayers for the Muslim community in their Shabbat sermons this week.

Sincerely,

Michael Pollack
JCRC Chair

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JCRC Director

Safeguarding rights and pursuing
social justice since 1938.

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