

2011-J2687

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION expressing the sense that the State of New York should take steps to counter the growth in discrimination, targeted rhetorical attacks, and violence against the Muslim, Arab, Sikh, and South Asian American communities

WHEREAS, Our great Empire State and Nation were founded on the principles of comity and religious freedom, as enshrined in Article I of the New York State Constitution and the First Amendment of the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, The protection of these principles is vital to the ongoing sense of community shared by the diverse peoples and religious groups of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Violent extremism is a serious threat to the sense of community fostered by the First Amendment and is perpetrated by individuals from a variety of racial, ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, The investigation of violent extremism must be careful to proceed based on the facts, not fear-mongering, innuendo or opinion, and critically relies on the cooperation and confidence of the public; and

WHEREAS, Law enforcement and government officials should avoid conduct that raises the specter of unconstitutional profiling, including the assignment of blame or targeting members of an entire religious, ethnic, or geographical community for increased suspicion, based on the conduct of a single or small group of individuals; and

WHEREAS, American Muslims have over centuries long history of playing crucial roles in the United States Armed Forces and law enforcement, and as business leaders, physicians, lawyers, and teachers and are an integral part of diverse communities in cities and small towns throughout New York State; and

WHEREAS, American Muslims, like all citizens, want to live in safe communities, do their part to keep communities safe, and should enjoy the same rights and freedoms guaranteed to all citizens of the United States; and

WHEREAS, There exists in the United States today a disturbing and dangerous trend of anti-Muslim rhetoric and bigotry, evidenced by attacks against individuals, religious institutions, and entire communities; and

WHEREAS, Of the 24 cases brought by the Justice Department for the construction of mosques under the Religious Land Use & Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), 14 have been brought in the past 10 months alone; and

WHEREAS, Discrimination against Muslims comprise 25 percent of complaints of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, even though they are only 2 percent of the population; and

WHEREAS, Numerous Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim, have tragically been killed or experienced increasing levels of physical violence and discrimination both at work and school; and

WHEREAS, Members of the New York State Congressional delegation have recognized this alarming trend across our State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body has a solemn duty to ensure that its actions do not fuel misconceptions about, and prejudices toward, any faith community including the American Muslim community and Islam; and

WHEREAS, Putting an entire community under suspicion erodes trust in government and law enforcement at all levels, which, in turn, undermines public safety; and

WHEREAS, Targeting American Muslims for scrutiny based on their religion goes against the core principles of religious freedom and equal protection under the law; and

WHEREAS, Scores of religious, civil rights, law enforcement, and national security leaders and organizations representing diverse citi-

zens of the United States and areas of expertise are concerned about hearings which appear to target the American Muslim community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to express the sense that the State of New York should take steps to counter the growth in discrimination, targeted rhetorical attacks, and violence against the Muslim, Arab, Sikh, and South Asian American communities.