

## Online

- 1. Decide:** In many cases, the best response is not to react to provocation. Haters want you to respond to their provocations and it is better to initiate your own positive plan. Many obscure individuals or organizations crave the publicity your attention brings them.
- 2. Document:** If the Islamophobic content comes from an influential source, save the URL (Internet address). Note the date and time you accessed it.
- 3. Document:** Capture an image of the Islamophobic content. Note as much information about the author and source as possible.
- 4. Report:** [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com) and click "report an incident."
- 5. Challenge:** Use your ability and skill to increase knowledge of and familiarity with Islam and Muslims, whether through a post on social media or a short educational video.
- 6. Challenge:** Respond to insulting chain emails or online comments with accurate and balanced information.

## Meet Elected Officials

1. Call the Capitol Hill Switchboard at 202.224.3121 (have your zip code ready) for U.S. Congresspersons. For state and local officials, start with an internet search.
2. Send a written request for a meeting. Meeting request letters usually include: topics for discussion; names of those who will attend (if possible limit your group to less than 5); meeting date and time options; your address so they can verify that you are a constituent; and your phone number.
3. Send the request to whoever handles the official's schedule by fax or email. Wait two business days and then call and confirm that your request was received.
4. Be patient and flexible. It may take several calls and emails to get a meeting time.
5. Call the day before your appointment to re-confirm.
6. If you need more help, call CAIR's Government Relations Department at 202.488.8787.

## Elected Officials

- 1. Get Involved:** Sponsor copies of the Quran for delivery to local officials and leaders. Visit: [www.explorethequran.com](http://www.explorethequran.com)
- 2. Document:** The source, date, and other pertinent information surrounding Islamophobic comments made by a public official.
- 3. Document:** If not recorded, write down such comments quickly. Ask others to do the same.
- 4. Document:** If allowed by law, record town hall meetings or other public gatherings.
- 5. Report:** [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com) and click "report an incident."
- 6. Challenge:** Organize a local letter-writing or call-in campaign to express concerns to the person responsible for the Islamophobic statements.
- 7. Challenge:** Submit letters for publication in a newspaper. This can help involve a broader audience.

## School, College or University

- 1. Document:** Any incidents of Islamophobia, religion-based bullying, false or misleading statements in textbooks, anti-Islam comments by an instructor, or defamatory school newspaper articles.
- 2. Document:** If not recorded, write down Islamophobic comments quickly. Ask others to do the same.
- 3. Document:** If the Islamophobic material is in physical form, get a copy or take a photo and note as many details as possible, such as date, source and location.
- 4. Report:** Any of the above to school administrators. If school administrators are unresponsive or are the source of the Islamophobia, contact CAIR for advice.
- 5. Report:** If you or someone you know is targeted because of religion, go to [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com) and click "report an incident."
- 6. Challenge:** Arrange meetings with school administrators.
- 7. Be informed:** CAIR's "Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Pocket Guide" has more information.

## CAIR Offices

National Headquarters, Washington, D.C.	202.488.8787
Alabama	205.313.6489
Arizona	480.704.3786
CA, Greater Los Angeles Area	714.776.1847
CA, Sacramento Valley	916.441.6269
CA, San Diego	858.278.4547
CA, San Francisco Bay Area	408.986.9874
Connecticut	860.514.8038
Florida	813.514.1414
Georgia	404.419.6390
Illinois	312.212.1520
Iowa	319.573.6617
Kansas	785.251.0551
Maryland Outreach Office	202.741.9884
Massachusetts	617.862.9159

## CAIR Offices

Michigan	248.559.2247
Minnesota	612.206.3360
Missouri	636.207.8882
New Jersey	908.668.5900
New York	646.665.7599
Ohio, Cincinnati	513.281.8200
Ohio, Cleveland	216.830.2247
Ohio, Columbus	614.451.3232
Oklahoma	405.415.6851
Penn., Philadelphia	267.515.6710
Penn., Pittsburgh	412.606.3601
Texas, Austin	512.640.9421
Texas, Dallas-Fort Worth	469.554.0786
Texas, Houston	713.838.2247
Texas, San Antonio	210.378.9528
Washington	206.367.4081

## What is CAIR?

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is a grassroots civil rights and advocacy group, with regional offices nationwide. CAIR's 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.

## How Can I Help?

- 1. Be informed:** Sign up for our email list by visiting [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com). Follow CAIR on Facebook or on twitter @CAIRnational.
- 2. Help us serve you:** Monthly automatic donations, even \$5 a month, help the most. Call 202.646.6045 for an authorization form or visit [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com) and click on "support CAIR's work."
- 3. Take action:** Use the tools presented here and your own judgement to challenge Islamophobia. Your activism strengthens our community.
- 4. Respond to CAIR's action alerts,** volunteer at your local CAIR office or help establish a local chapter of CAIR.



Council on American-Islamic Relations

## Challenging Islamophobia

POCKET GUIDE

Islamophobia and other forms of prejudice can be eradicated.

We need your help.

Be an agent of change.

[www.islamophobia.org](http://www.islamophobia.org)

## What is Islamophobia?

Islamophobia is a closed-minded hatred, fear, or prejudice toward Islam and Muslims which results in discrimination, marginalization, or oppression. It is one manifestation of the issue of prejudice that has plagued our nation since its earliest days.

We work toward the time when being Muslim carries a positive connotation and Islam has an equal place among many faiths in America's pluralistic society.

We recognize that while Muslims are a primary focus of hate today, prejudice is not limited in who it may be directed toward. For this reason, we continue to work to ensure social and legal protections for all Americans.

CAIR publishes reports on sources, funding and manifestations of Islamophobia in the U.S. They are available on [www.islamophobia.org](http://www.islamophobia.org) or you can request that a speaker visit your community through <https://www.cair.com/publications/request-a-speaker.html>.

## Features of Islamophobia

The belief that:

1. Islam is monolithic and cannot adapt to new realities.
2. Islam does not share common values with other major faiths.
3. Islam as a religion is inferior to the West. It is archaic, barbaric, and irrational.
4. Islam is a religion of violence and supports terrorism.
5. Islam is a violent political ideology.

*(Source: Runnymede Trust)*

## The U.S. Islamophobia Network

Within the U.S. there exists an influential network of groups and individuals who falsely cast Islam and Muslims as a malevolent existential threat.

CAIR has identified 33 groups and individuals which exist primarily and exclusively to vilify, demonize, and promote hatred and fear toward Islam and Muslims. CAIR's 2016 Islamophobia report, *Confronting Fear*, found that this inner core had access to at least 205 million dollars in total revenue over a five-year period. There are other groups and individuals who use Islamophobic tropes, but it is not their sole mission to promote prejudice and hate.

You can get detailed information on these groups on [www.islamophobia.org](http://www.islamophobia.org). This is particularly helpful when bias groups are operating in your hometown.

## Top Strategies for Countering Islamophobia

Confirmation bias ensures that humans tend to seek out information which reinforces what they already believe. They are also likely to reject information that contradicts their beliefs. The points below will help you counter this dilemma.

1. Show don't tell. Be a living example of your morals and values.
2. Be a benefit to humanity, avert harm from humanity. Be an active pillar of social justice for all in your community.
3. Use the familiar. Explain Islamic ideals using U.S. history and ideals.
4. Stay true to you and keep your cool. When confronted by hate, be assertive and polite. Rudeness will hurt your cause and be used against you.
5. Turn a negative into a positive. For example, when a place of worship is vandalized, bring the community to repair and clean it up as a show of unity.

## Get Active Locally

Neighborhoods that have a tradition of mutual support and understanding are less susceptible to prejudice.

1. Involve other communities when dealing with Islamophobia.
2. Form coalitions that promote mutual understanding. Bring people of different backgrounds together for projects that improve your community, such as blood drives and health fairs.
3. Join local organizations like the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).
4. Attend school board meetings and city council meetings.
5. Vote. Run for public office such as school board or city council.
6. Join or start a CAIR chapter.
7. Donate educational materials about Islam to public and school libraries.
8. Submit an opinion piece to your newspaper about an issue of local importance.
9. Invite local leaders and the public to a mosque open house. (See CAIR's "Welcome to Our Mosque" brochure.)
10. Invite public officials to speak about community issues at your mosque.
11. Leverage social media to network and promote an accurate image of Islam and Muslims.

## News and Entertainment Media

**Document:** The date, time, channel or program, and name of the person who made the comments. Try to obtain a recording of the incident. Note advertisers whose ads aired during the program's prejudiced content. If you are tracking a pattern of biased discourse, begin recording the program every time it airs.

**Report:** [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com) and click "report an incident."

**Challenge:** Contact an editor, station manager, or other official from the media outlet to express your concerns. Always be respectful, clear and assertive. See "Writing a Letter to the Editor."

**Challenge:** Contact CAIR to obtain copies of "American Muslims: A Journalist's Guide to Understanding Islam and Muslims" and distribute to local media.

**Challenge:** Organize a coalition to join a community meeting with the outlet's management.

**Challenge:** If these meetings do not yield a satisfactory result, contact CAIR for more detailed guidance.

## Writing a Letter to the Editor

Following these guidelines will increase your chances of publication:

1. React quickly to the news of the day, negative coverage or views you support. If possible, have the letter in the hands of an editor on the same day.
2. Check the publication's online submission guidelines. A rule of thumb for length is 150 to 250 words.
3. State the purpose of the letter in the first 25 words or less.
4. Pick one main topic and focus solely on that issue.
5. Be authoritative. If possible, speak on behalf of a local organization in which you are involved.
6. Give background information on the issue or misconception. Cite impartial and objective sources.
7. Offer a reasonable and fair solution to the problem you are addressing in your letter.
8. Be passionate or even controversial, but avoid rhetoric and defamation.

## Workplace

1. **Document:** Any incidents of Islamophobia, whether harassment, intimidation, or something more severe. This includes supervisors forwarding Islamophobic e-mails, Islamophobic "jokes" posted on bulletin boards, Islamophobic remarks made during company training sessions, name calling, or derogatory nicknames.
2. **Report:** If you or someone you know is targeted because of religion, go to [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com) and click "report an incident."
3. **Challenge:** Professionally speak up and challenge the source.
4. **Report:** If the behavior repeats, report it to a supervisor or human resources officer.
5. **Be informed:** CAIR's "Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Pocket Guide" has more information.