



**Council on American-Islamic Relations  
Litigation and Civil Rights Department**

453 New Jersey Ave. S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

Tele 202-742-6420 Fax 202-379-3317

E-mail: [civilrights@cair.com](mailto:civilrights@cair.com) URL [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com)

---

April, 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Cape Girardeau Office  
Rush H. Limbaugh, Sr. U.S. Courthouse  
555 Independence Street  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703  
Fax: 573.335.2393

*Via Fax*

RE: US v. Nicholas Proffitt, No 1:20-MJ-04087  
Mr. Jeffrey Jensen:

My name is Gadeir Abbas, and I am an attorney with the Council on American-Islamic Relations. I write to urge you to bring federal charges against Nicholas Proffitt, who was arrested Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> 2020, for committing his third crime against a mosque over the last two decades.

On the first day of Ramadan, this defendant deliberately set fire to the Cape Girardeau Islamic Center. Not only did he inflict immense physical damage against this house of worship, his crime terrorized the Muslim community of Cape Girardeau just as they began to observe the holy month of Ramadan. This hate crime has had its intended impact, as Muslim Americans across the country have followed the news with alarm.

This was not the defendant's first attack against Muslims. In 2005, he attacked a mosque in Michigan. In 2009, Mr. Proffitt threw rocks at the Cape Girardeau Islamic Center and served three years in prison. This is a repeat offender who poses a grave risk to Muslims everywhere.

But a federal prosecution would do more than simply impose federal penalties on this defendant. A federal prosecution of Mr. Proffitt under the various hate crime statutes applicable to his crimes would send a clear message that the United States of America rejects the defendant's bigotry. Such charges would be the clearest signal to the Muslim community in Cape Girardeau and beyond that the federal government stands ready to protect it and will deploy its resources to do so. State charges, while important, will not send the same message.

For more than 20 years, Muslim Americans have worshipped at the Cape Girardeau Islamic Center. Despite this vile crime, decades from now, Muslim Americans will still be worshipping there. But the federal government has an important role to play now in re-establishing a sense of safety among congregants that will allow this community to flourish and know—without a doubt—that the federal government stands with them against this violent bigotry.

Regards,

/s/

---

Gadeir Abbas, Senior Litigation Attorney