

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.



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May 13, 2026

The Honorable Chip Roy
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government
U.S. House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mary Gay Scanlon
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government
U.S. House Judiciary Committee
Federal Subcommittee Office
2142 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

CC: All Members of the Subcommittee

Dear Chairman Roy, Ranking Member Scanlon, and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, we write to condemn the Subcommittee's continued effort to legitimize anti-Muslim hate through a second so-called "Sharia-Free America" hearing.

This hearing revives conspiracy theories repeatedly debunked by legal experts, academics, civil rights advocates, and interfaith leaders. We again direct the committee to CAIR's memorandum prepared ahead of the previous hearing, "[*Weaponized Islamophobia: The Return of the Anti-Sharia Hoax*](#)," and an educational fact sheet "[*Sharia in American Life*](#)," as well as CAIR's attached fact sheet, "[*The Practice of Islam in America*](#)," which explains how ordinary Islamic religious practice operates fully within the bounds of the U.S. Constitution.

Islam is an American religion. Muslims have been present in what is now the United States since the colonial era, including enslaved African Muslims brought to this country in chains while stripped of both religious liberty and individual liberty. Today, millions of American Muslims

contribute to American society while exercising the same constitutional rights guaranteed to all Americans. Islamic moral and legal traditions are part of the broader history of human civilization and jurisprudence, not a foreign conspiracy against the Constitution.

As explained in CAIR's attached fact sheet, "sharia" refers to the moral and religious principles Muslims follow in their daily lives, much like canon law in Catholicism or halakha in Judaism. American Muslims follow sharia when they pray, fast during Ramadan, give charity, avoid alcohol, or structure private agreements around their faith. These practices are protected by the First Amendment. Existing constitutional law already prohibits any religion from superseding the Constitution or civil law in the United States.

CAIR was founded in 1994 to protect the civil rights of the Muslim American community and challenge discrimination. Today, that mission is more urgent than ever.

In 2025, CAIR received 8,683 complaints nationwide, the highest number recorded since our first civil rights report was published in 1996. Anti-Muslim narratives portraying Islam as inherently threatening or anti-American have sharply resurfaced in recent years, particularly among elected officials, political organizations, and initiatives such as the so-called "Sharia-Free America Caucus." Hearings such as this one contribute directly to a growing climate of anti-Muslim hate, intimidation, discrimination, and calls for exclusion targeting the American Muslim community.

In 2026, researchers at the Center for the Study of Organized Hate (CSOH) described what they called "*an unprecedented level of coordinated anti-Muslim bigotry by elected officials in the U.S.*" involving dozens of elected officials, hundreds of anti-Muslim social media posts, multiple legislative proposals, and the creation of a formal congressional caucus dedicated to promoting anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. Researchers further documented rhetoric amounting to the "*explicit endorsement of, or incitement to, violence against Muslims*" and language advocating forms of ethnic cleansing through public policy. Many members and allies of the so-called "Sharia-Free America Caucus" are actively fueling the climate of hostility documented in this research.

It is within this broader climate that this subcommittee has once again chosen to platform prominent promoters of anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. Among the scheduled witnesses is Amy "Mek" Mekelburg of the RAIR Foundation, an organization accused of promoting anti-Muslim conspiracy theories, associating with anti-Muslim extremists and white nationalist figures, and portraying Muslim Americans as a civilizational threat. Mekelburg herself has publicly described Islam as a "*death cult*" and "*parasitic cult*," falsely portrayed ordinary Islamic prayer as evidence of Muslims attempting to claim American cities, and promoted conspiracy

theories alleging a coordinated effort to “dissolve Christian civilization” through Muslim immigration.

Mekelberg also reportedly platformed the Saudi-born atheist and anti-Muslim extremist who went on to perpetrate a massacre at a Christmas market in Germany in apparent retaliation for Germany’s failure to sufficiently support “ex-Muslims” like him.

Another scheduled witness, Ammon Blair of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, recently attacked New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani for referencing Islamic teachings about protecting strangers and immigrants, falsely portraying those comments as an attempt to subordinate constitutional government to Islam.

Blair publicly accused Mamdani of “elevating prophetic example above constitutional sovereignty” simply for invoking Islamic moral teachings about caring for refugees and immigrants alongside references to similar teachings in other faiths.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation has also amplified the work of anti-Muslim extremist figure Sam Westrop of the Middle East Forum, whose founder Daniel Pipes once warned about “*brown-skinned peoples*” coming to the West “*cooking strange foods*” and maintaining “*different standards of hygiene.*” Pipes has also called for banning Muslim women from wearing clothing of their choice, called the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II a model for how American Muslims should be treated, and accused President Obama of practicing Islam.

Rather than presenting credible evidence of any constitutional threat posed by American Muslims, these fringe, unqualified witnesses and the organizations they represent have repeatedly portrayed ordinary Muslim religious and civic engagement as inherently suspicious, disloyal, or incompatible with American society. Members of the so-called “Sharia-Free America Caucus” and individuals aligned with this movement have publicly declared that ‘Muslims don’t belong’ in American society, warned of the “Islamification of our country,” and called for the destruction or removal of “mainstream Muslims” from the United States.

We call on all members of this subcommittee to unequivocally disavow calls for violence, exclusion, or discrimination against American Muslims and to uphold constitutional principles of religious liberty and equal citizenship.

The Constitution protects not only religious liberty, but also the freedoms of speech, association, petition, and political participation. American Muslims possess the same constitutional right as every other religious community to organize politically, advocate for policies, lobby elected officials, support charitable causes, and bring their moral and religious values into public life.

Efforts to portray Muslim civic participation itself as suspicious or unconstitutional are a direct attack on the First Amendment and equal protection principles at the core of American democracy.

Public institutions may not target one faith community for suspicion or exclusion because elected officials disagree with that community's religious beliefs or political advocacy. Yet with these hearings and the majority's repeated choice of witnesses, this subcommittee is treating Muslim religious identity and Muslim civic engagement as matters of suspicion rather than protected constitutional activity.

CAIR will continue defending the American Muslim community against organized efforts to erode the constitutional rights of Muslims in this nation. We call on the House Judiciary Committee to reject anti-Muslim conspiracy theories, cease using congressional authority to stigmatize a faith community, and uphold the constitutional rights and equal citizenship of all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert S. McCaw". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Robert S. McCaw
Government Affairs Department Director
Council on American-Islamic Relations

ATTACHMENT

FACT SHEET: THE PRACTICE OF ISLAM IN AMERICA

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, is releasing this fact sheet to address growing misinformation and political attacks targeting the faith and constitutional rights of American Muslims. At a time when anti-Muslim politicians and organizations are attempting to portray ordinary Islamic religious practices as incompatible with American society, it is critical that policymakers, media, and the public understand what sharia actually means, how Muslims practice their faith in America, and why the Constitution fully protects those practices.

What is Islam?

Islam is an Arabic word that can be translated as "submission to God." Islam refers to the religion, or way of life, followed by Muslims. Muslim is also an Arabic word. It can be translated as "one who submits to God."

What does sharia mean?

Sharia is an Arabic word that can be translated as "the path" or "the path to water." Similarly to canon law in Catholicism and halakha in Judaism, sharia refers to the religious rules of Islam developed through centuries of religious scholarship. In English, scholars often use sharia as synonymous with "Islamic law." The use of the phrase "sharia law" is therefore redundant and misguided. Saying "sharia law" is like saying "Islamic law law."

What topics does sharia, or Islamic law, address?

Although interpretations of sharia can vary, the five universally recognized objectives of Islamic law are the protection of life, religion, intellect, family, and property. Based on the teachings in The Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him), sharia includes religious guidance related to prayer, charity, diet, cleanliness, and marriage, among many other topics.

Like canon law and halakah, some aspects of sharia relate to governmental matters that only a state could enforce, such as rules in both the Bible and the Quran related to criminal punishments, taxation, etc. Muslims cannot and do not enforce such rules in the United States.

What role does sharia play in the lives of American Muslims?

Every person who has practiced Islam on this land, from the enslaved African Muslims who helped build our nation to famed modern American Muslims like Muhammad Ali, followed sharia. When Muslims pray five times a day, fast in Ramadan, tithe annually, and avoid drinking alcohol, eating pork, or charging interest on debt, they are following sharia.

Does the practice of Islam, i.e. following sharia, conflict with U.S. law?

No. The personal religious practices of Islam cannot and do not supersede or contradict the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees everyone in our nation the right to practice their faith so long as their personal practices do not violate the law or the rights of others. Sharia also teaches that Muslims must obey the laws of the land in which they live unless those laws require them to do something indisputably and inherently immoral.

Do states need to pass laws banning “sharia law?”

No. The First Amendment of the Constitution already forbids the government from establishing a religion. The judiciary therefore cannot and does not issue rulings that purport to interpret or impose any religious laws.

Do states need to pass laws banning “sharia law?” (Continued)

At the same time, courts can and do sometimes enforce private contracts and decisions which may be inspired by religious teachings. For example, a court overseeing a dispute about a last will and testament could enforce a deceased person’s wish that their body be buried in a grave because of their Jewish faith, as opposed to being cremated. Similarly, a court overseeing a business dispute could enforce a contract between two Muslim-owned businesses in which both parties agreed to not charge the other interest on debt in accordance with Islam’s prohibition on usury.

Courts must also generally allow churches and other houses of worship to make internal hiring decisions based on religious teachings, which secular employers and government agencies cannot do.

State laws which pass "foreign law bans" or “sharia law bans,” which forbid courts from upholding any private contracts or private decisions inspired by religious, are unconstitutional. Such bans risk depriving people of the right to privately practice their faith guaranteed by the First Amendment.

What is the Sharia-Free America Caucus?

Sixty members of Congress belong to a newly created caucus that calls itself the Sharia-Free America Caucus. The caucus seeks to denigrate the faith of Islam, prevent American Muslims from practicing Islam in our nation, and ban Muslim immigrants from entering our nation. Members of the so-called Sharia-Free Caucus in Congress have made their views and goals clear many times:

1. In a post to X on Feb. 17, 2026, Rep. Andy Ogles (R-TN) wrote, "No more public displays of Islam please. [It is not American.](#)" [Archive.](#)
2. On March 9, 2026, Rep. Andy Ogles (R-TN) posted the following to his X (formerly Twitter account), "Muslims don't belong in American society. [Pluralism is a lie.](#)" [Archive.](#)

3. Caucus co-founder Rep. Keith Self (R-TX) posted, "[Islam is on the march and seeks world domination](#)" to his X account.
4. During a November 19, 2025 floor speech Rep. Self said he believes "[Islam is a culture with a patina of religion](#)." He later also added, "There is no denying Islam's intent to dominate Western civilization. Their stated objective is to destroy us from within."
5. Caucus member Rep. Randy Fine (R-FL) has discussed the need to "[solve the Muslim problem](#)," and called to "[destroy](#)" "mainstream Muslims." Fine has supported [the starvation of Palestinian civilians](#) and a religious cleansing of the U.S. via the [mass removals of mainstream Muslims](#) from the United States. Fine has faced backlash for implying dogs are [preferable to Muslims](#).
6. During an interview with Newsmax, Rep. Brandon Gill said, "The reality is that Islam is a political ideology that is incompatible with the United States. It's [incompatible with our constitutional system and with Western civilization more broadly](#)."
7. In an interview with WBAP's Morning News Podcast on February 3, 2026, Caucus co-founder Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX) warned against the "Islamification of our country" which, according to Roy, "[is inconsistent with Western civilization](#)"

What should the American public know about American Muslims?

American Muslims serve this nation in every capacity and benefit from the same constitutional protections as all other Americans. They are guided by both faith and civic responsibility to respect the U.S. Constitution, follow the law, and contribute to their communities and to their nation.