

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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October 11, 2016
Start: 10:25 a.m.
Recess: 12:08 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: JAMES G. VAN BRAMER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Elizabeth S. Crowley
Julissa Ferreras-Copeland
Peter A. Koo
Stephen T. Levin
Andy L. King
Costa G. Constantinides
Laurie A. Cumbo
Helen K. Rosenthal

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Afaf Nasher, Attorney and Executive Director
NYC Council On American-Islamic Relations

Albert Cahn, Director of Strategic Litigation
Council on American-Islamic Relations of New York

Assia Badhi

Melony Robbins
Anti-Defamation League, ADL

Dr. Debbie Almontaser
NYC School System

Christina Tasca, Executive Director
Muslim Community Network

Linda Sarsour, Executive Director
Arab American Association of New York

Anu Joshi, Deputy Director
New York State Immigrant Action Fund

Sunita Viswanath
Sadhana Coalition of Progressive Hindus

Priscilla Reed
Westchester Coalition Against Islamophobia

Dr. Ivan Kahn, CEO
Cons Tutorial

Kazi Fouzia, Organizer
DRUM, Desis Rising Up and Moving

Muzeda Oden
Coalition Fund for Education and Scholarship

Jappa Medousa La Mousa, the President
Southeast Queens Muslim Collective
Member, Islamic Circle of North America

Shaikh Ahmed Baruch

[sound check, pause] [background
comments]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yep, great.

Good morning everyone. [coughs] Good morning and
welcome to this hearing of the Committee on Cultural
Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup
Relations. We are formally in session, and we are
going to take up Resolution 1230 today introduced by
Council Member Daneek Miller. Resolution 1230
declares that the city Council's support for our
Muslim communities is ever present, affirming the
religious pluralism of the United States, and urging
all residents to stand together for peace and
understanding. Obviously, one only need to turn on
the television or the radio to know that in this
election season we've been confronted with xenophobic
anti-Muslim and racist rhetoric at levels that we
haven't seen in a very, very long time. New York
along with many other cities across the country are
taking a stand against the hatred that we've seen
espoused by far too many. By passing similar
resolutions in solidarity with Muslims and Muslim
communities, and affirming, of course, this country's
commitment to freedom of religion and a society that

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2 embraces diversity. We thank Council Member Daneek
3 Miller for bringing this to the Council's attention,
4 and we are I'm sure going to hear from Council Member
5 Miller in a few moments, but I'd like to recognize
6 members of the committee who are here, and I know
7 that we have a lot of meetings going on, and votes
8 going on. So we'll allow folks to vote now, and call
9 the vote. We are joined by Council Member Costa
10 Constantinides from Queens, Council Member Elizabeth
11 Crowley from Queens, Council Member Peter Koo from
12 Queens, Council Member Helen Rosenthal from
13 Manhattan, and I know Council Member Julissa
14 Ferreras-Copeland also of Queens is present and with
15 us, but also at another hearing in the Chambers.
16 [background comments, banging door] Are we prepared
17 to the roll? One moment. [pause] Yep. Alright, so
18 as-as I said, welcome to everyone who is joining us
19 for this very important hearing of the Committee on
20 Cultural Affairs and Libraries on Reso 1230. I know
21 lots of folks who were part of the press conference
22 on the steps moments ago, this Council stands united
23 with our Muslim brothers and sisters, and this
24 resolution, which we're all proud of, confirms that
25 for the world because there are so many votes going

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2 on simultaneously, so many meetings going on
3 simultaneously, we're going to ask the Council
4 Members to vote now, and then, of course, we will
5 hearing all of the testimony from all the folks who
6 wish to speak to this very important resolution, and
7 I'm sure we'll be joined by Council Member Miller at
8 a very, very near point in the future, but because we
9 have Billy Martin here, we are going to take the
10 roll. Obviously, I'll be voting to support this
11 resolution and urge all of my council members to do.
12 So, Mr. Martin, if you call the roll.

13 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk.
14 Roll call vote Committee on Cultural Affairs. Chair
15 Van Bramer.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I vote aye.

17 CLERK: Crowley.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I vote aye.

19 CLERK: Ferreras-Copeland.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS-COPELAND: I vote
21 aye.

22 CLERK: Koo.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote aye and Mr.
24 Chair, I would like to add my name to be one of the
25 co-sponsors.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Absolutely.

CLERK: Constantinides.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: I vote
aye.

CLERK: Rosenthal.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I vote aye and
I think I already added my name to be a co-sponsor,
but I'd like to verify that on the record. Thank
you. So I vote aye. Thank you very much.

CLERK: By a vote of 6 in the
affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
the resolution has been adopted by the committee.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I think we
missed Council Member Levin.

CLERK: Council Member Levin, my
apologies.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I understand it.
I vote aye, and I'm very proud to join my colleagues,
Council Member Miller and the rest of my colleagues
in-in co-sponsoring this resolution. I vote aye.
Thank you.

CLERK: The vote now currently stands at
7 in the affirmative.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And while he doesn't get to vote in this committee, we are pleased to be joined by Council Member Brad Lander from Brooklyn as well. So, once Council Member Miller is able to arrive, we will certainly hear from him on his very important resolution, but I think at this point we will begin to hear testimony from the folks who are assembled. Although Council Member Andy King from the Bronx has arrived, and if you'd like to vote on the resolution right now, Council Member King, you have that ability.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Aye.

CLERK: The vote is now 8 in the affirmative.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Great. Thank you very much. Good timing, Council Member King. So we will begin hearing testimony. If I call your name, please come up and take one of these four seats. I think there will be a two-minute clock for those testifying. I believe we have Afaf Neshar (sp?) from CAIR New York; Albert Cahn (sp?) or I'm sure I'm not reading that correctly also from CAIR, Albert, right? [background comments, banging door] Cahn. Got it. Is it Asia Badhi or Assur-Assia Badhi

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2 and Melony Robbins from the Anti-Defamation League.
3 [background comments] Those will be the first four
4 speakers, and then we have many more who will be
5 testifying as well, but I see that we've been joined
6 by our prime sponsor, Council Member Daneek Miller.
7 So before we hear the testimony of this first panel,
8 I think it's important that we hear from our sponsor
9 and my good friend from Queens Council Member Daneek
10 Miller

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good morning and
12 thank you so much Council Member Van Bramer for
13 holding this very important hearing on Resolution
14 1230, and thank you for everyone that came out this
15 morning and--and--and showed their support, but-- So,
16 1230 resolving that the Council of the City of New
17 York declares support for the Muslim community,
18 affirms religious pluralism of the United States and
19 urges all the residents to stand together for peace
20 and understanding. It is also said that we have to
21 have this hearing, but the reality is that it does--
22 that we do have to have this hearing. Just as have--
23 stand out front many times affirming our commitment
24 and our solidarity in the face of Islamophobia,
25 xenophobia and hate in New York City. Clearly, these

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2 are trying times, times in which in the last year we
3 have seen more anti-Muslim acts than since 9/11. As
4 we said earlier, 78 mosques were targeted and
5 vandalism is the highest number since this has been
6 recorded. And this is certainly an important
7 resolution affirming the contributions, commitment of
8 the Muslim community, but the commitment of New York
9 City is the same on right side of justice. And I
10 thank everyone. I thank you so much, Mr. Chair for
11 holding this hearing here, and we've been—real quick—
12 we have something going on. They have to do a vote
13 in Civil Service and Labor. I want to be back here.
14 So I want to hear and understand the testimony
15 because we don't get better if we don't engage, and
16 this type of engagement is certainly what makes us
17 better time and time again. We said before it is—it
18 is this engagement, it is these conversations that
19 become public policy, that becomes legislation, that
20 becomes practice day to day, and if we're not talking
21 about it, we're not fixing it. So I am so thankful
22 for—for the committee here on Cultural Affairs for
23 hearing this, and addressing this so that we as New
24 Yorkers can affirm not just our commitment to the

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2 Muslim community, but our commitment to truth and
3 justice. So thank you so much.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
5 much, Council Member Miller for your leadership, and
6 we appreciate you bringing this forward to the
7 committee, and before we even began here, you picked
8 up several co-sponsors of this resolution, as well as
9 at least eight votes already, including my own. So,
10 Council Member Miller will return, but we wanted to
11 begin because I know so many people want to speak
12 about this very important resolution, and we can
13 start in whatever order the panel would like, but
14 always good probably to start left to right.

15 [background comments, pause]

16 AFAF NASHER: Good morning.

17 MALE SPEAKER: [interposing] Thank you
18 for allowing to speak. [pause]

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: You won't be
20 penalized for the time. There's a lot going on
21 today. So when that door opens up, you'll hear the
22 other hearing going. Just keep going--

23 MALE SPEAKER: [interposing] Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --but--but no
25 worries. Thank you.

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AFAF NASHER: [Speaking foreign language]
We being in the name of the creator of all humanity
the most compassionate and merciful. [speaking
foreign language] We bring you [door bangs] also
greetings of peace to every single one of you here
today and beyond. My name is Afaf Nasher. I'm an
attorney and I'm also the Executive Director for the
Council On American-Islamic Relations, New York
Chapter. We are the largest of all rights advocacy
organization for Muslims in the United States with
over 30 offices spread from sea to shining sea. We
advocate for the civil rights of Muslims in America
who have experienced the irreparable harm of
discrimination and—and injustice in schools, in the
workplace, in the streets, and even in our homes. I
am pleased, humbled and especially grateful to have
this opportunity before all of you today to address
you our elected Council Members in firm support of
Resolution 1230, which seeks to declare the City
Council's support [banging door] for its nearly one
million Muslims and growing living in New York City.
I extend my sincerest gratitude to brother and
Councilman Miller as the main sponsor, but also to
each and every single one of you as well as the

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2 collective committee for standing already firmly in
3 support of this resolution. I also ask that each of
4 you work with an unwavering dedication to get this
5 resolution passed swiftly, sending a message to the
6 world that our New York City leaders not only
7 believe, but also publicly affirm that Muslim New
8 Yorkers are deserving of the respect that every other
9 people of various faiths and of no faiths deserve and
10 receive. Members of the Council, it is imperative
11 that we voice our resolve against the misguided and
12 often illegal actions targeting Muslims. Resolution
13 1230 voices our resolve against the ugliness of
14 hatred and bigotry. It gives us an opportunity to
15 voice our support of the beautiful array of Muslims
16 [banging door] black, white, tan and yellow [bell],
17 East Asian, South Asian, African, Arab, Hispanic,
18 European, young and old, first generation American
19 and Muslims who have been here since the very
20 inception of this nation. It affirms religious
21 freedom as guaranteed under the First Amendment of US
22 Constitution as well as the rights and civil
23 liberties that are embedded in other amendments and
24 subsequent federal and state legislation. Some may
25 inquire why is it that this affirmation has to be

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2 publicly announced? I think writer Zora Neale
3 Hurston answered these thoughts when she said, "If
4 you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you, and
5 they say you enjoy it." Again, if you are silent
6 about your pain, they'll kill you and they'll say
7 you've enjoyed it. Well, the New York City Muslim
8 community will not be silent. We will not be silent
9 to the pain of the opposition we face when there is a
10 mosque being constructed, or when an existing mosque
11 is vandalized. CAIR reports that in 2015 alone there
12 were over 70 incidents targeting mosques across the
13 nation, and that includes damage, destruction,
14 threats and acts of intimidation targeting our
15 religious institutions. [banging door] We will not
16 be silent to the pain of employment discrimination
17 and the hiring process or when legally protected
18 accommodations to Muslims are unjustly denied. The
19 Center for American Progress points to a 250%
20 increase in religious discrimination cases filed with
21 the EEOC after 9/11. That is one-quarter of all
22 religious employment cases. We will not be silenced
23 when our children, an entire generation of youth, are
24 called terrorists in their class by peers and in
25 school buses, and treated as such by those who are

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2 supposed to protect them. Bullying has risen at such
3 a rate that Muslims face twice the national average
4 rates. We will be silent when our young and old are
5 beaten, assaulted and even killed in the streets.
6 Fresh in our memory are the recent cases of violence
7 throughout the five boroughs including cleric and
8 women. And as the Muslim community continues to
9 grow, and continues to amplify our voices through
10 many forums, we turn to you, our respected New York
11 City Council Members to raise your voice in unison
12 with ours. For surely, when one group's civil
13 liberties is undermined, then every group is being
14 challenges, and the City as a whole is under siege.
15 This is especially true here in New York City where
16 our strength where our pride, where our example on
17 how we thrive on diversity is broadcasted to the
18 world both literally and figuratively. This is
19 especially true because of the travesty of 9/11. It
20 happened here in our hometown. Shamefully, despite
21 Muslims also perishing in that tragedy, shamefully
22 despite Muslims also being among the first responders
23 that saved lives, shamefully despite Muslims also
24 serving our country locally, nationally and
25 internationally, some people would falsely question

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2 American-Muslim loyalty. Some would have the
3 audacity to impose on our community blatantly false
4 suspicions as if our tears were not shed, as if blood
5 not spilled, as if our hearts did not pound with
6 sorrow and did not swell with compassion for those
7 that were lost. Members of the New York City Council,
8 Resolution 1230 is about speaking up. As the writer
9 Ella Wheeler Wilcox wrote, "To stand by silence when
10 they should protest, makes cowards of men." Muslims
11 are no cowards. We will practice our faith
12 unapologetically as permitted by our laws. We will
13 protest every injustice perpetrated against us in the
14 social and political spheres in courts and at the
15 ballot box. Our voices will not be silenced no
16 matter what happens. The only question before us
17 today is whether the entire New York City Council
18 will join the millions of constituents of both Muslim
19 New Yorkers and non-Muslim New Yorkers of conscience,
20 and state to the world that New York City does, in
21 fact, affirm religious pluralism, and that its
22 residence and its political leaders stand together
23 for peace and understanding. I thank you again for
24 this opportunity to be heard, and urge all of you to
25 do your best to pass [banging door] Resolution 1230.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much, and unfortunately we didn't have your printed testimony to go along with, but obviously I disbanded with the two-minute time limit out of respect. Also, you're the first person to speak. So I did not want to start off this hearing by cutting you off, but we will go back if all of you because there are so many who want to testify, but we want to hear from everybody. We'll try to and adhere to the two-minute time limit, but you started it off well, and I think very thoroughly. So I appreciate and with that, we'll hear from the second person. Thank you very much.

ALBERT CAHN: Good morning. My name is Albert Cahn and I'm the Director of Strategic Litigation for the Council on American-Islamic Relations of New York. I speak in support of Resolution 1230 today because I want this Council to honor its most noble tradition of standing up for those religious communities that face harassment, discrimination and violence. In 1903 before there even was a City Council when this city had a Board of Aldermen, it spoke in the face of anti-Semitic violence. In 1921, this Council's predecessor once

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2 again spoke when the Ku Klux Klan threatened the
3 religious liberty of New Yorkers. Time and time and
4 time again when religious communities have been
5 threatened this Council has spoken and the need has
6 never been greater than it is today. We see threats.
7 We see violence against Muslims of every age, in
8 every community of every background. We see Muslim
9 students bullied at unprecedented rates. According
10 to CAIR's statistics from California, we saw one in
11 five Muslim students is bullied on the basis of their
12 religion, by the very school staff, the very school
13 staff who are supposed to protect them. One in five.
14 We saw that 27% of Muslim girls who wear the Hijab,
15 who wear head covering face unwanted and
16 inappropriate physical conduct. But the most
17 horrifying example are the hate crimes, and we have
18 seen a surge of those in New York. In Brooklyn we
19 saw two young Muslim mothers pushing their babies in
20 strollers down a street in Brooklyn on a sunny day
21 when they were attacked, punched, and kicked. Their
22 Hijabs pulled out. They were attacked by a woman who
23 screamed at them, "This is America. You shouldn't be
24 different from us." Why I say it to you? In America
25 we say you can be different from us. That difference

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2 is not a threat to this. [bell] It is our defining
3 virtue. It is the life blood of our democracy and it
4 is something that we must defend by passing
5 resolution 1230.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
7 much. Well, times as well. Thank you. [laughter]

8 ASSIA BADHI Good morning and thank you
9 for the opportunity to testify in support of
10 Resolution 1230. This is a personal testimony. My
11 name is Assia Badhi. (sp?) I'm a proud Muslim New
12 Yorker living and working in the city. I volunteer
13 my time on civic and public hospital boards, work in
14 public health where my passion is to help make the
15 city better. My husband and I are raising our 8 and
16 10-year-old daughters in the city. They go to public
17 school in the Lower East Side, love Mr. Frosty ice
18 cream in the summer, play lacrosse in the Bronx and
19 soccer off the FDR. They go to Sunday School on the
20 weekends. Every night after homework they practice
21 the Quran in Arabic and listen to an iPhone app to
22 help memorize the Arabic prayers. They are New York
23 City kids. Earlier this year my second grader came
24 home after school, and the first thing she asked me
25 off the bus was if a certain candidate is elected

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2 mama will we have to leave our home. He class had
3 had a current events discussion regarding
4 presidential debates that day, and one candidate's
5 comments left my daughter anxious and upset. As a
6 mom, I encourage my daughters' concern and continue
7 to do when the topic comes up. I, of course, know
8 also that the teacher did not intentionally mean to
9 upset my daughter. Rather, there was a lack of
10 teacher understanding of the impact of such a
11 discussion. I engaged the school principal. They
12 responded appropriately and quickly with teacher
13 education. I assume that my daughter's classroom
14 experience was not unique. Similar ones have taken
15 place in other schools throughout our country. The
16 Southern Poverty Law Center on the recently dated
17 study of teachers have the following: More than two-
18 thirds of the teachers reported that students mainly
19 immigrant children and children in Muslim homes have
20 expressed concerns of fears about what might happen
21 to them or their families after the election. The
22 long-term impact of the current climate is hard to
23 tell, but I along with others worry about how this
24 will impact the civic engagement of our children as
25 well as the senseless cost and belonging to America.

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2 Thought I'm moved by the current resolution and
3 welcome any and all work towards the reducing of
4 Islamophobia, I respectfully ask the City Council to
5 consider both funding and mandating government agency
6 programs to reduce all types of phobias and isms.
7 Research shows that the same efforts that reduce
8 Islamophobia are those that will reduce homophobia,
9 racism, sexism, and any other types of [banging door]
10 bias against anyone for their color, creed, sexual
11 orientation and gender. I'm happy to work with the
12 Council [bell] on this. Thank you very much.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very,
14 very much, and our last speaker on the panel, and I
15 also should note that we've joined by Council Member
16 Laurie Cumbo from Brooklyn on the Committee, and
17 rejoined by Council Member Miller, the prime sponsor
18 of this very important resolution.

19 MELONY ROBBINS: Good morning. On behalf
20 of the Anti-defamation League, I'm here to express
21 our strong support for Council Resolution 1230, which
22 specifically rejects anti-Muslim rhetoric and
23 violence, affirms the religious pluralism of the
24 United States, and urges all residents to stand
25 together for peace and understanding. Founded over a

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2 century ago, ADL is the nation's leading civil rights
3 and human relations organization combatting anti-
4 Semitism and all forms of bigotry as well as
5 promoting understanding and diversity throughout the
6 United States and abroad. To that end, we are an
7 ardent advocate for religious freedom for all
8 Americans whether in the majority or minority. ADL
9 plays a leading role in exposing and combatting anti-
10 Muslim bigotry and hatred. We have been alarmed by
11 and concerned about the recent trend of hateful
12 rhetoric and violence directed toward Muslims in New
13 York City particularly with the emergence of ISIS and
14 the recent terrorist attacks around the globe coupled
15 with the growing atmosphere of fear mongering. There
16 has been an increase in incidents targeting the
17 Muslim community, and those who are perceived to be
18 Muslim. We have seen Islamophobia, the fear, hatred
19 and discrimination of Muslim people manifesting
20 itself in personal biases, rhetoric, education,
21 politics, hate crimes and more. These incidents and
22 rhetoric have left New York City's Muslim community
23 feeling intimidated, vulnerable and isolated. All
24 Americans have a stake in responding to violent
25 bigotry. By passing this resolution, New York City

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2 Council will send a strong message to the entire
3 community that Islamophobic rhetoric and violence has
4 no place in the city, and that American-Muslim
5 community is not alone. We commend you for standing
6 together against bigotry, hatred, and prejudice. We
7 must continue to speak out against and work to
8 prevent and educated against the scapegoating of
9 minorities in America. ADL will continue to support
10 efforts to combat Islamophobia, promote pluralism and
11 encourage all residents of New York City to embrace
12 peace, and understanding between. Thank you for your
13 action to support these important goals, and we urge
14 your adoption of Resolution 1230.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
16 much, all for your testimony and I know that some of
17 the members have questions, and—and comments before
18 we hear from the second panel. But I think you were
19 all very kind not to mention the certain political
20 candidate by name, but—but—but I believe I can. I—I
21 represent a district in Queens, Woodside, Sunnyside,
22 Long Island City and Astoria that has many Muslims,
23 and I'm very proud of that relationship. We also are
24 home to the Razi School, which is a—a very large
25 school, and I go to the school fairly regularly.

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2 And—and last fall I went and spoke to several of the
3 classes from the youngest of—of the kids. It's pre-K
4 through—through 12, to the oldest. I mean every
5 single class all of the kids wanted to ask me about
6 Donald Trump. All of them and I was struck by the
7 conversations from the youngest to the oldest. There
8 was a lot of fear particularly amongst the younger
9 kids about what it would mean, and—and I went and I
10 said to every single class I want you to know that—
11 that as a—as a democratically elected representative
12 I am proud to have the Razi School in my district.
13 I'm proud to represent all of you. We're not going
14 to let his happen to our country. You're safe.
15 You're—you're loved, you're welcome, and obviously I
16 have lots of problems with—with a Republic candidate
17 for president in this country, but—but that was such
18 a—a revelation about how wrong the rhetoric is, and
19 how damaging it can be to children, beautiful
20 innocent children who are in Woodside, Queens. And—
21 and I spoke to the principal, and he mentioned that—
22 that the young girls who are wearing Hijab are
23 sometimes subject to the most scorn particularly on
24 the 7-Train as they go back and forth because they
25 are so visible in their faith. So, I—I wondered if

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2 some of you could talk about that, the impact on
3 children, the fear that this rhetoric stokes. And we
4 talk about hate crimes. We know that words have
5 meaning, and—and—and they also insight actions, and I
6 was so happy to hear you talk about homophobia. As
7 one of the openly gay men in the City Council who is
8 very proud to represent a diverse constituency, I,
9 too, believe that—an attack on one of us is an attack
10 on all of us, and we have to speak out every single
11 time. Because if we allow one of our neighbors to go
12 attacked silently, then we are all attacked. We are
13 all vulnerable, and—and we've learned that so many
14 times throughout history. And so, I—I said to those
15 children and I believe we will be okay because there
16 are more good people than bad people. But maybe you
17 can speak to some of those experiences and—and—and
18 the real fear that—that this toxic climate and this
19 rhetoric is producing, and then some—obviously the—
20 the—the actions that it also is producing. I don't
21 know if any of you want to speak to that.

22 AFAF NASHER: So first of all, thank you
23 for exerting the effort and the time and energy to go
24 into your community or district and speaking to
25 people, and reaffirming the principles that our

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2 country was founded upon especially as you said with
3 the—you are—you're 100% correct in saying that those
4 that are visibly identifiable as Muslim-Americans
5 have been targeted the most. And hatred knows no age
6 and so it's with—been with children, it's been with
7 others as well. At CAIR, we receive over what? How
8 many? 200—over 200, 250 calls a month from people
9 who are calling in requesting for various forms of
10 assistance due to discrimination and bigotry. Some
11 of those have unfortunately been assault on subways,
12 on the streets, in their own stores. As you know, in
13 Astoria there was brothers. They're called Hakuhas
14 (sic) and beaten by someone saying I will kill
15 Muslims, right? In Ozone Park recently the cleric
16 and his associate were killed and again they were
17 just coming out of their mosque because they were
18 identifiably Muslims wearing traditional clothing.
19 The Brooklyn case that my colleague mentioned a
20 moment ago, there were two women who were covered
21 Islamic dressed and again they were targeted as
22 hateful rhetoric was spewed at them, and that is now
23 being prosecuted. But one thing I want to mention
24 that perhaps many of you may not know, and work that
25 we've discovered within CAIR is as we go along to

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2 communities and doing proactive work as educating
3 people about their right, almost every single time
4 people will come up to me and they'll start telling
5 me their personal stories and experiences. You have
6 to know that Muslim-Americans still do not report all
7 of what is actually happening. The hate crimes are
8 extremely under-reported to the point where I would
9 say 70 to 80%. There are lines literally of people
10 waiting. I've heard stories of a woman saying for
11 two weeks straight somebody was going through her
12 neighborhood her block at a certain time of night and
13 throwing glass bottles at her door. She's visibly
14 Muslim. She covers her entire face. I've heard
15 parents coming and we spoke about children in
16 particular. Parents coming and telling me is it safe
17 for me to allow my kid religiously, you know, and
18 religious attire to ride the subways, and they have
19 to second think it. And parents are being put in a
20 situation in which they want to give strength to
21 their children, and their identity without them
22 having to shy away, but at the same time they have to
23 be practical in their assessments of what is really
24 going on in the streets. And so what I've always
25 told them is never to back away from who and what you

1
2 are and what you believe, but simply take practical
3 steps to make sure that you're cautious of your
4 surroundings. Bullying is an epidemic throughout the
5 nation and New-New York. Again, my colleagues
6 pointed to the fact that Muslim children are being
7 bullied in schools far more than anyone else and, you
8 know, it's not that Muslims are not bullied in other
9 respects as well. They're still being bullied for
10 all the other terrible reasons that kids bully other
11 kids. But we cite these numbers twice as much as the
12 national average, we're not looking at the bullying
13 from every angle and perspective. We're only saying
14 bullying due to their religious identity. So, just
15 think about the other forms of bullying as-as well,
16 and you see how the-the numbers are-is exasperated.
17 (sic) I don't want to take up all the time. I'll
18 open the floor.

19 ALBERT CAHN. I-I just wanted to quickly
20 add that a study by Cal State San Bernardino found
21 that there is a 78% increase in the anti-Muslim hate
22 crimes in 2015, the most recent year that they have
23 on record. Georgetown University found that the
24 Muslim-American today is six to nine times more
25 likely to be a victim of hate crime than they were

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2 before 9/11. The Southern Poverty Law Center has
3 found that since 2014 there has been a 42% increase
4 in anti-Muslim hate groups, and one thing that's
5 important to keep in mind is while yes the current
6 presidential election may have increased a large
7 volume of the anti-Muslim bigotry, violence,
8 harassment. It is not going to end on election day,
9 and this Council, this city and this country needs to
10 take steps to make sure that they have the resources
11 necessary to counter anti-Muslim harassment once
12 election day is over, and this particular
13 presidential candidate is no longer on the national
14 stage.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Does anybody
16 else want to add to that?

17 MELONY ROBBINS: Okay. Yeah, I just want
18 to add that one other way to think about bullying and
19 something that we've been working on a lot at the ADL
20 is what's happening online as well. It's not about
21 just what's happening person-to-person, but the kind
22 of hate that we're seeing against, you know, a
23 variety of groups. Of course, Islamophobic hate
24 online, but also Anti-Semitic hate online, and it is
25 getting to a point where it's become almost

1
2 normalized. These ultra right groups are creating
3 ways to get around some of the anti-hate resources
4 and things that companies have invested in in order
5 to combat this, and so one of the things that we're
6 spending a lot of time and attention on is how to
7 combat this not only in the schools with our
8 educational programs, but also how to combat this
9 hate that's growing online and spreading like wild
10 fire. And so, that's another thing to keep in mind
11 as we think about combatting this sort of hate and
12 bullying.

13 ASSIA BADHI: I'll just go—I'll go ahead
14 and add on because we talked about sort of things
15 globally from a bullying and sort of a hate crime.
16 One of the things that I found when I worked with my
17 own school's principal is that they really want to
18 create more culturally equitable programming, and
19 they see that creating sort of a more positive
20 environment is by showing children different visions.
21 But the one struggle was for the New York City Daily
22 was finding was finding those resources, and having
23 sort of like a list for like the high school and
24 middle school of really great, you know, books to
25 read that have those like with some main characters

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2 or authors or, you know, who have lost muscle. Like
3 they—they really need support I think in finding
4 those sort of very diverse cultural resources, and I
5 think they also need I think some more teacher
6 education on how to handle current event discussions.
7 I grew up in Ohio. I grew up in a very white non-
8 Muslim place. I was the only Muslim child growing
9 up, and I will say there was a lot of cultural event
10 discussions there that were very anti-Muslim, but I
11 never felt that I questions my ability to live in
12 America, and I think that is what's worrisome to me
13 that this is different now, and this is a different
14 sort of flavor, and that—that is my big worry. So
15 how much we can do to really help kids feel like
16 everybody is a little different. Everybody is part
17 of this world, and how we can help them feel that
18 they see themselves, or that school and—and—and other
19 places to go.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Absolutely.
21 [coughs] And certainly we can't sort of boil all
22 Islamophobia down to one person or one election
23 cycle, but certainly it has been exacerbated and—and
24 it is a—a sometimes scary time right now. But you
25 mentioned hate a crime in Astoria. I don't know if

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2 that was the exact same one because there's been
3 multiple hate crimes in Astoria directed at Muslim-
4 Americans, and one in particular was on the border of
5 my district with Council Member Constantinides, and
6 we did have a press conference denouncing that hatred
7 together just as I had a press conference recently
8 about a trans woman who was attacked in Woodside.
9 All of this needs equal and forceful responses to
10 make sure that everybody knows that that's not
11 acceptable, but also that for folks who are harassed
12 or victimized know that—that the vast majority of
13 Woodsiders or Astorians stand with them, and—and—and
14 I hope those messages get out. I know some of the
15 other members of the committee would either like to
16 make statements or questions. Council Member
17 Rosenthal, did you have something?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I am certainly
19 not as eloquent as you, Council Member. I just want
20 to thank everyone on the panel for coming for your
21 time, for your thoughtful comments, and really poetic
22 comments, and I really appreciated what you have to
23 say and your being here today and again I think
24 Council Member Miller for bringing this resolution
25 forward. You know, I really—as—as we were just

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2 saying, this needs to get national attention, this
3 resolution. The support for this resolution needs to
4 have national attention at this time. We were just
5 saying that for us it's a matter—it's natural that we
6 would be together talking about this, talking in
7 support. It's common sense, and it needs to be
8 national because we need to continue to be leaders
9 about what people are—it's bizarre we're even talking
10 about this but, you know, expect what expectable
11 behavior is with each other. So, I support your
12 voices. Continue to be loud. Thank you very much
13 for the work that you do.

14 AFAF NESHER: Can I just very quickly.
15 You know, I—I had mentioned that what we do in New
16 York City is often an example for the rest of the
17 world. It wasn't when the Mayor de Blasio and
18 various commissions put out the I Am New York City
19 Campaign. I got called as far as Johannesburg in
20 South Africa, calling and saying what a beautiful
21 thing that New York City did, and we wish that we
22 could do it here, too. And so, it's not even just
23 national, but it's international. The opportunity
24 that we have here is a national and international
25 opportunity to show what New York City stands for,

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2 and we want to again thank all of you for being part
3 of that, and making it happen.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
5 much. We're going to allow Council Member Cumbo to
6 vote real quickly if Billy Martin would call the
7 roll.

8

CLERK: Continuation roll call,
9 Resolution 1230, Council Member Cumbo.

10

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I proudly vote
11 aye, and would like to also have my name added to the
12 resolution.

13

CLERK: The final vote on this Reso now
14 stands a 9 in the affirmative.

15

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
16 much, and we have a couple other council members. I
17 do just want to say Queens understands and
18 appreciated diversity probably better than just about
19 any other place. That's why we're even more proud
20 that Council Member Miller is the prime sponsor of
21 this resolution, and Queens gets it, and—and we are
22 very, very proud to be the most diverse place in—in
23 virtually the entire world. I know Council Member
24 King has another function to go. We'll hear from him
25 and then Council Member Lander.

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COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Just quickly,
Councilman Miller, thank you for helping us put
together a conversation that allows us to be a little
bit more tolerant and civil amongst each other. I
thank you all for your passion, your belief system.
You know, Dr. King said if you have anything to die
for, you having to live for. So, regardless when our
children have to experience the education and their
belief system and they have the Office of Discipline
and a way of life I think is great among the Muslim
community, but more important it teaches those of us
who are running rampant with no stability how to get
it right as family. So as they continue to stay
strong in their faith, continue their belief,
continue to offer love that us to the next
generation, we got your back here in the Council and
sign me up. I'm ready to join the fight. Thank you
Council Member Miller. Keep staying strong, my
Muslim brother. We welcome. [speaking foreign
language]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much Council Member King. Council Member Lander.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you, Mr.
Chair and—and thanks, of course, to Council Member

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2 Miller, and especially to all of you for being here
3 and for the courage to keep standing up and pushing.
4 I just want to add two things. First, we had a
5 network of local elected officials all across the
6 country joining us. I'm proud to be on the board of
7 Local Progress, which is a national network of
8 progressive local elected officials, and together
9 we'll be on the Elected Officials Network. More than
10 500 electeds from all across the country have signed
11 a letter against hatred and anti-Muslim bigotry. So
12 we are part of something bigger, and then I just—I do
13 want to flag while obviously at the moment it's the
14 courage of our Muslim brothers and sisters that we
15 are standing up with—we have an extraordinarily
16 diverse community. I know we're going to hear from
17 our—our Hindu friends and Sanita, this woman
18 testifies and Christians, but I just want to say that
19 as a Jew I'm especially pleased that the ADL is here,
20 the Jewish Community Relations Council has also
21 submitted testimony. We've seen this before, and we
22 have a very critical responsibility. We all do, but
23 as a Jew's boy we certainly do. We know what this
24 looks like, and we know where it can lead, and we are
25 with every step of the way. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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2 ALBERT CAHN: Can I just add one thing
3 quickly? As—as a Jewish lawyer who works on behalf
4 of the Muslim community everyday, I think it is
5 indispensable for our communities to come together at
6 moments like this. I am very grateful for
7 Councilman—Councilman Lander for saying that, and for
8 the leadership that he and other members of, you
9 know, the Jewish community are showing at this
10 moment.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
12 much. If there are no other comments for this panel,
13 we'll say thank you very much for being here, and
14 call up the second panel. And there we will start
15 with Dr. Debbie Almontaser, Linda Sarsour, Christina
16 Tasca, and Anu Johsi. [pause] Why don't we go ahead
17 and start, and—and we'll work others in as
18 appropriate. [pause]

19 DR. DEBBIE ALMONTASER: Okay. [laughter]
20 Okay. Good morning. My name is Dr. Debbie
21 Almontaser. I send only peace and greetings. (sic)
22 I am truly honored and humbled to have the
23 opportunity to be sitting here and thanking each and
24 every City Council Member who has actually drafted
25 this very important resolution. I will start off by

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2 saying that I'm not going to sit here and ask you all
3 to vote for this because anyone who chooses not to
4 vote for this is simply choosing not to vote for
5 their dignity and respect as a human being. And so
6 it is a moral imperative that each and every City
7 Council Member votes for this resolution. I sit in
8 front of you as an American-Muslim who has worked for
9 the last 25 years in the New York City Public School
10 system. I serve with honor and distinction as the
11 leader who have had the opportunity to work on all
12 levels from an assistant teacher to a teacher, a
13 staff developer, a principal, and an administrator on
14 an administrative level. I've had the opportunity to
15 see everything in the last 25 years, and I came to
16 the conclusion that I needed to serve the American
17 Muslim community as well as the Arab and South Asian
18 communities from the outside to make sure that their
19 rights are respected, and that each and every child
20 feels a sense of inclusion and respect as a human
21 being. And that each and every one of their peers
22 sees them no differently. So this resolution is
23 critical as a resolution, but I ask each and every
24 one of you to take it a step forward, and make it
25 policy and funding for these communities. In the

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2 last 25 years it's been difficult to be within the
3 system and not be able to advocate, and so I sit here
4 in front of you to ask you that you make sure and
5 advocate for city students. This past school year
6 five families brought to my attention issues of
7 prejudice and bullying not to mention the number of
8 children and families that fear reporting incidents.
9 So I ask the Education Committee to hold a hearing
10 requesting that the DOE share the orange (sic)
11 incident reports [bell] that are entered by schools
12 across the city. Upon review of these reports
13 provide culture sensitivity training in schools with
14 the high number of incidents. We ask the Education
15 Committee to encourage the DOE to partner with Arab,
16 Muslim and South Asian organizations as well as the
17 Commission for Human Rights to devise K to 12
18 curriculum focusing on cultural sensitivity. In
19 addition, we ask the Public Safety Committee to
20 request that the NYPD School Safety incorporate
21 cultural sensitivity training specifically on Arab,
22 Muslim and South Asian students in order to serve and
23 protect their rights, not see them through a security
24 lens. We ask the Committee on Cultural Affairs to
25 allocate funding for public schools and Arab, Muslim

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2 and South Asian cultural organizations to educate
3 about these cultures through the arts. When the
4 Mayor and the Chancellor announced the Muslim
5 holidays in 2014, Chancellor Farina stated the
6 holiday as a teachable moment highlighting the
7 diverse cultures of Muslim New Yorkers. I ask the
8 Council let's make it a priority to work with her to
9 make it happen. And lastly, we ask that each
10 committee to have a quality assurance mechanism to
11 monitor the work and evaluate its effectiveness in
12 these programs that I have suggested. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
14 much. That's the value of—of providing your written
15 testimony because I read ahead and I—I—we went over
16 time, but I really wanted to have you say on the
17 record the things that you said. I thought that's
18 really important, even challenging my own committee
19 to do more. And, you know, we did create the
20 Cultural Immigrant Initiative three years ago myself
21 and—and the Speaker. It's now a \$5.2 million fund
22 that really targets organizations that serve
23 immigrant communities by and for immigrant
24 communities that have budgets of less than a million
25 dollars. It's our first effort to really sort of

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2 target and get deep into the grass roots. Obviously
3 we can should experiment, and I—I certainly hope that
4 at least some of the organizations under CAI are—are
5 reaching the target audience that you speak of there
6 but it's something that I will look at now, and—and
7 make sure that we're doing, and then obviously your
8 challenge is to do even more. So thank you for that,
9 and next we'll hear from Christine I think.

10 CHRISTINA TASCA: Good morning Council
11 Members. I am Christina Tasca. I'm the Executive
12 Director of the Muslim Community Network. Can you
13 hear me? The Muslim Community Network is a non-
14 profit organization that works to build consensus
15 among the Muslim and multi-faith communities of New
16 York City, and equips community members with the
17 tools and resources to advocate for the rights and
18 interests of their neighbors and loved ones. Of
19 particular concern and important to us are the
20 welfare of youth, and we have been working since 2012
21 to build the next generation of leaders through our
22 hallmark program MYNY that encourages civic
23 engagement and good citizenship among Muslim teens.
24 Youth in our programs have shared heartbreaking
25 accounts of what it's like growing up Muslim in a

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2 tide of rising Islamophobia. Mothers move their
3 small children away from them in the subway. They
4 are bullied and greeted with sneers and slurs like
5 terrorist and ISIS, and some of them are terrified to
6 leave them—leave their homes after a terror attack or
7 hate crime against Muslims. Earlier this year, one
8 of our students stepped onto the bus, and a man
9 pointed his fingers at her like a gun and pretended
10 to shoot her. No child should have to feel like hate
11 and fear and threat of violence are a normal part of
12 their childhood. On behalf of the staff and board of
13 Muslim Community Network, I am deeply grateful to
14 each of those who have co-sponsored this bill,
15 Council Members Daneek Miller, Wills, Lander,
16 Menchaca, Levine, Barron, Richards, Cornegy, Palma,
17 Dickens, Greenfield, Chin, Constantinides and Levin,
18 and those who signed on this morning for introducing
19 this resolution. Its passage will send a strong
20 message from our leaders that the Muslim community is
21 an integral part and valued part of our city. In
22 addition, I urge the City Council to act beyond and
23 expression of solidarity to implement concrete
24 measures of support that will ensure Muslim and those
25 who are perceived to be Muslim are protected and

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2 prepared to serve those experiencing anti-Muslim
3 hate. Community based organizations [bell] like MCN
4 need additional funding and support for educational
5 reach—for educational programs, mental health
6 services, and youth development programs like MYNYC
7 to better equip Muslim teens and school to respond to
8 a rising tide of Islamophobia. We are stronger when
9 we stand together. America is rooted in our ability
10 to come together especially during times like these,
11 and its passage will be—the passage of this
12 resolution will be a starting point for further
13 support for those experiencing this hate and fear.
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
16 much. We've been joined by Council Member Ruben
17 Wills, another special guest. Linda, you're up.

18 Good—good morning, good afternoon. I—I
19 don't these days where we're at, but thank you and
20 I'm very honored and grateful to be here today. My
21 name is Linda Sarsour. I'm the Executive Director at
22 that Arab American Association of New York, a leading
23 immigrant rights organization as well as a social
24 service agency supporting refugees, asylees and
25 immigrants in South Brooklyn. I'm a New Yorker born

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2 and raised in Brooklyn and a product of the New York
3 City Public School system. I'm also a mom of three
4 New York City public school students. As you know,
5 one out of every eight New York City public school
6 students is Muslim, and this particular resolution at
7 this time is very important, and actually
8 brainstorming here how we can get the message our
9 even further so that our young people know that those
10 in public service are standing up for them, and
11 saying that hate and violence against Muslims is not
12 acceptable. Silence is violence. So this resolution
13 is important because when our city and our public
14 servants are silent it creates an acceptable
15 environment of violence and hatred towards American
16 Muslims in other communities. I'm not going to go
17 into mentioning the many hate crimes and the many
18 heartbreaking stories that you've already heard today
19 because I think you are all very well aware of them.
20 I'm hoping that this resolution, which I know
21 resolutions are made to set tone, and we hope that
22 these resolutions are also about—to information
23 policy, and decision making. And as you know,
24 recently the Inspector General, which we were very
25 fortunate to work with the New York City Council on

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2 came out with report saying that 95% of the documents
3 that they reviewed as part of the Report on
4 Intelligence Gathering was of Muslims or related to
5 Muslims. So if we're going to say that we're
6 standing up against for—standing—standing up for
7 Muslims, and with Muslims, we also need to be vocal
8 about saying that unwarranted surveillance of Muslim
9 communities is unacceptable. And, I also want to
10 reiterate the call for reviewing Schedule C and
11 seeing that the Muslim community we are about one
12 million Muslims in New York City that are not getting
13 anywhere near their fair share of resources, and most
14 recently the New York Foundation, the Ford
15 Foundation, the New York Community Trust engaged in a
16 [bell] partnership fund to support building
17 resiliency in Muslim communities. And as we saw with
18 the Young Woman's Initiative and many initiatives in
19 the New York City Council for me I think a follow up
20 would be an opportunity to create a fund to match the
21 fund of the New York Foundation, the New York
22 Community Trust and the Ford Foundation to help build
23 resiliency, build educational programs, build
24 reporting requirements. All these things that we
25 need in the Muslim community. So I'm grateful to be

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2 here. I thank you for this opportunity, and I hope
3 that we allow this resolution to be an implementation
4 in everything that we do and say here at the New York
5 City Council.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

7 ANU JOSHI: Good morning. My name is Anu
8 Joshi and I'm the Deputy Director of the New York
9 State Immigrant Action Fund. We're a 501(c)(4)
10 organization that envisions a political system that
11 is responsive and representative of our diverse
12 community needs. And we know that right now we're
13 facing a dangerous moment in American history, and we
14 call on all New Yorkers to join this resolution to
15 protect and respect our rights as immigrants, as
16 Muslims and as human beings, and as that immigrant
17 action has endorsed and it's supporting candidates
18 who uphold these values. That's why we knew we
19 couldn't afford to sit out his election, and why we
20 must stay engaged and hold our candidates and elected
21 officials accountable. We know that every day
22 American Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim are
23 confronted with bigotry of the sorts that we've heard
24 of today. They are accused of being less than full
25 Americans, or ask to somehow prove their worth to the

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2 rest of us living here, to take on some additional
3 nonsensical burdens beyond the imaginary front lines
4 of a never ending war, and we deserve better from our
5 presidential candidates, and from our elected
6 officials. So, that's over the next 29 days and
7 we're in action, and our members will be working
8 tirelessly to turn out the vote in immigrant
9 communities in New York, and in neighboring swig
10 states in support of those candidates who support
11 this country's stated commitment to religious
12 freedom.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
14 much. I believe that Council Member Miller would
15 like to say a few words, and I am going to take this
16 opportunity to go and vote in the adjoining room as
17 well, but hopefully return before the next panel.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, so I-I-I'm-
19 I'm going to be brief. I-I just want to make mention
20 that I think it was last year, or perhaps the year
21 before I had an opportunity and honor to take-to be a
22 part of a-an-over there-of an-of an exhibit that was
23 being done by CUNY and it was called the faces of
24 Islam, and so what I want to submit to everyone that
25 is here today that this is truly the faces of-of

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2 Islam that we've seen here today despite the
3 narrative of what you hear about how we value or do
4 not value the women of the Islam. East Queens here
5 are on the front line each and every day doing the
6 work that has to be done to support not just our
7 community but our city and they are truly a microcosm
8 of who we really are. So I—I just want to put that
9 on—out front and say that I publicly say how much I
10 value the work that you do, and that this is truly
11 the face of Islam. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Council Member
13 Lander.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And just to build
15 on that, you know, after the murder of the Imam, we
16 had the Muslims in—in Kensington, the bang—the most
17 Bangladeshi community organized. Just a—such a power
18 vigil, and it was the first time that all four of the
19 mosques in the neighborhood had gotten together to do
20 anything public and so the Imams and mosque leaders
21 spoke and then, too, just fire brand young Muslim
22 women Nancy Vahoc (sp?) and Johanna Haneek (sp?) as
23 some of you know, and to have them all speaking
24 together supported by their neighbors of every other
25 faith was moving and beautiful and just an example I

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2 wish everybody in the country could see, and I'm
3 grateful that all of you in different ways are
4 stepping up with voter registration and civic
5 engagement and making your voices hear, and leaning
6 into it. It's just so easy and polarized times to
7 want to step back whether that's hiding or just not
8 fighting, and the fact that you and—and your
9 organizations and communities and communities all
10 across the country are—are mobilizing and engaging
11 and modeling that for young people is inspiring and
12 helps us try to step up as Uralas (sic). Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
14 much, and I'll just add as somebody who came out of
15 the closet in 1989 and participated in lots of civil
16 disobedience with groups like Crenation (sic) and—and
17 Act Up. I have great appreciation the role that all
18 of us had to play in forcing the change that often is
19 not easy, and—and the forces that resist that change,
20 but all of you in one way or another are forcing the
21 change that we need to see in this city and this
22 country. So with that, we'll thank you to everyone
23 on this panel, and call the next panel starting off
24 with Sunita Viswanath, and Priscilla Reed, Dr. Ivan—I
25 hope that's King Kahn, and it looks like Kazia Fouzia

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2 from Drum. Desi is rising up and moving. Why don't
3 we start with Sunita move down the panel. Thank you
4 very much.

5 SUNITA VISWANATH: [off mic] Turn on the
6 mic, please.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Turn on the
8 microphone.

9 SUNITA VISWANATH: This little button?

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: If the red light
11 is on, you're on.

12 SUNITA VISWANATH: I'm Sunita Viswanath
13 and I'm representing Sadhana Coalition of Progressive
14 Hindus. Hinduism is a religion has pluralism at its
15 very core. Sadhana means faith in action, and we in
16 Sadhana Coalition of Progressive Hindus seek to
17 mobilize Hindus to speak and act for justice
18 particularly when justice is denied. In this time of
19 heightened xenophobia, Islamophobia, and increased
20 hate crimes, we stand in solidarity with our Muslim-
21 American brothers and sisters and add our voice in
22 testimony in support of Resolution 1230, which
23 declares support for Muslim communities affirming the
24 religious pluralism of the United States, and urging
25 as all residents to stand together for peace and

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2 understanding. A June 2016 report issued by CAIR and
3 Berkeley indicated that the number of recorded
4 incidents in which mosques were targeted rose to 78
5 in 2015, which is the highest number since the
6 entities began tracking these crimes in 2009. The
7 violent backlash that is taking place against
8 innocent Muslims, and other South Asians including
9 Hindus across this country is disheartening and
10 terrifying. We have seen death threats against one
11 of our nation's only two Muslim congressmen in DC
12 [banging] hate crimes against numerous mosques and
13 gurdwaras (sp?) including a severed pig's head thrown
14 in a Philadelphia mosque, attacks on Muslim owned
15 businesses and recently the murder of a beloved
16 Queens Imam and his assistant in broad daylight in
17 busy street as they were leaving their place of
18 worship. Last Thanksgiving Sadhana organized a
19 larger rally in response to a hate crime in our
20 community in Ozone Park, Queens, New York when a man
21 set fire to 40 Hindu prayer flags in a Hindu family's
22 front yard. About 100 people gathered there that
23 night, one cold [bell] freezing night in a—in a block
24 that was hard to get to, and many people who are on
25 the streets of—on the steps of City Hall this morning

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2 were there with us that day. And the message was we
3 are one, and that is the message that I bring today.
4 We are one. Many hate crimes against Shikhs and
5 Hindus are perpetrated by Islamophobic people who are
6 ignorant of the difference between Muslims, Shikhs
7 and Hindus, and part of what we in Sadhana do is go
8 into our Hindu community with this message of acutro
9 (sp?) or oneness to say that if-if-if Muslims in our
10 country are-are discriminated against, whether or not
11 we are ourselves victims of hate crimes, we are
12 discriminated against because we are one, this the
13 hear of our tradition of faith. Those who
14 perpetrated heinous acts of hatred and those who seek
15 to deny Muslim or any immigrants their basic civil
16 rights do not represent us or speak for us since hour
17 Hindu faith teaches us to live with each other as one
18 family. Our message to all those who reject these
19 proponents of hatred and bigotry and violence is join
20 us. We are called to exhibit courage, love and
21 compassion by standing in solidarity with our
22 neighbors, our fellow community members, our brothers
23 and sisters from whom this moment is one of pure
24 terror. Our time to act is now. Our time to speak
25 is now, and we must act and speak together as one.

1
2 Sadhana Coalition of Progressive Hindus is committed
3 to standing with our Muslim-American brothers and
4 sisters shoulder to shoulder in courage in our
5 struggle to achieve equality and justice for all. We
6 are one.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

8 PRISCILLA REED: Is this on.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: It is.

10 PRISCILLA REED: Okay. Good morning and
11 thank you for this opportunity. My name Priscilla
12 Reed. I'm here this morning as a representative of
13 the Westchester Coalition Against Islamophobia, a
14 grassroots association of concerned citizens, non-
15 Muslim and Muslim committed to opposing bigotry and
16 discrimination against Islam and its faithful, and to
17 defending the civil rights of all. The appearance of
18 Islamophobic ads in August 2012 placed by Penwood
19 Geller on Metro North train platforms galvanized our
20 formation. In Westchester to date we haven't
21 experienced the violent incidents of bigotry that
22 have been enumerated here today. The form that
23 Islamophobia has tended to take in Westchester are
24 discrimination in the workplace, stereotyping and
25 hostility on the streets, bullying in schools and

1
2 attempted to prevent the establishments of mosques
3 and cultural centers in the town of Newcastle in
4 Yonkers. Back in August 2012 in September, only one
5 public official stood up to denounce the Geller ads.
6 That was Town Supervisor Paul Finer in Greenburg.
7 Whether the ads went largely unnoticed or simply
8 didn't strike our elected officials as worrisome
9 enough to merit reaction, the response we mobilized
10 involved mainly social justice organizations and some
11 clergy and limited media attention. As you know,
12 since 9/11 anti-Muslim attitudes and activities have
13 risen precipitously. They're getting even worse in
14 this presidential election largely in this cycle
15 because of the influence of Donald Trump. We in
16 Westchester don't want to wait until [bell] injury or
17 death inspire a more concerted public response.
18 We're reaching out to county and local officials
19 urging them to deter violence. We urge the City
20 Council to act on Resolution 1230. We know that this
21 will resonate in Westchester and across the state and
22 the nation. Please act and accept Resolution 1230.
23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
25 much. Dr. Cahn.

1
2 IVAN KAHN: Good morning everyone. My
3 name is Dr. Ivan Kahn. I'm the CEO of Cons Tutorial.
4 We're a midsize education company with ten locations
5 serving the outer boroughs of New York City with over
6 300 teams members. It concentrates into the largest
7 and present Muslim college students in New York City
8 and together we serve over 3,000 families every
9 weekend, the vast of them Muslim New Yorkers in
10 grades K through 12. I speak before you today to
11 affirm the religious pluralism of the United States
12 and support all New Yorkers to stand united with
13 Muslim families at this tense time in our country's
14 and beloved city's history. I moved to Corona,
15 Queens as first grader in 1987, just one year after
16 the New York Mets won the World Series. While it was
17 exciting to live just one train through the epicenter
18 of America's national pastime in Shay Stadium, life
19 wasn't easy for low-income New Yorkers in the mid-
20 80s. In addition to adjusting to a new country,
21 recent immigrants from Bangladesh, Indian and
22 Pakistan had a particular tougher time when compared
23 to other new groups from Eastern Europe or Latin
24 American nations. These extra challenges could be
25 attributed to the difference as language, body, skin

1
2 tone, culture and dare I say our religious
3 differences. In the time that I entered the New York
4 school system, the beauty of America was thoroughly
5 explained to me as six-year-old first grader. Race
6 by birth but Bangladeshi by identify. I learned
7 about this country's constitution, take pride in
8 reciting the Pledge every morning, and understand
9 that our country was founded on the basis of freedom
10 of religion, a key tenet of our First Amendment
11 rights. When I was running up in neighborhoods like
12 Allenhurst and South Ozone Park, I was rarely singled
13 out from the color of my skin or my faith. I sadly
14 remember things drastically changing when my parents
15 worked their way up the economic ladder and moved us
16 to a more affluent neighborhood. By-by the time I
17 was age 12 I was suddenly being reminded of my being
18 different, and I would be subject to names like
19 Gandhi, Dot Head or min mart owner (sic). It felt
20 strangely ironic. The better my family did
21 economically, the more we were reminded that we
22 didn't belong. After the waste of moving back to the
23 immigrant enclaves of Queens where I felt more safe,
24 and overall much more welcome, these examples just
25 touch the surface. By the time the horrific attacks

1
2 of September 11th happened, anti-Muslim sentiments in
3 the United States started to skyrocket. Though
4 hundreds of the victims of 9/11 including Muslim
5 first responders and workers in the Twin Towers, the
6 Muslim children—the Muslim children of that era will
7 forever be suspected of being terrorist sympathizers,
8 anti-American, Jihadists or non-human. [bell]
9 Countless times Muslim girls across New York City are
10 physically harassed just for wearing Hijab, or
11 publicly humiliated or menaced in our subways and
12 buses due to our religion. But, for our boys it
13 wasn't much better. They've been called names like
14 Bin Laden, Osama, Taliban, ISIS. I've attended more
15 than on share of vigils and funerals more recently
16 after attacks of—and terrorizing of Muslim New
17 Yorkers in Astoria. When I was there, Council Member
18 Van—Van Brun—Van Bramer, Jackson Heights. I was on
19 Park—Parkchester and more recently Jamaica, where I
20 had a chance to meet many of the City Council members
21 who gave their time. Despite the increase of
22 Islamophobia, we're becoming increasingly organized
23 today. In addition to being one of the fastest
24 groups in New York City, discussions like today are
25 just one step toward equality for all New Yorkers.

1
2 In a sphere, the emergence of Muslim civic groups
3 have created leaders like Linda Sarsour who we just
4 heard from, Ali Majaeny (sp?) and Imam Caba Latif
5 (sp?) [bell] to name a few. As I complete my remarks
6 before you, please keep in mind that the best of
7 tomorrow's youth are looking to lead our country, and
8 in the next several years. We comprise 10% of the
9 entering class of Stuyvesant and Bronx and it's
10 victim tact that are just from our tutorial. If any
11 of you have seen the—the HBO hit, The Night Of, it
12 includes many and up and coming Muslim stars and
13 sheds light into the intersection of our criminal
14 justice system, and how it affects immigrant groups.
15 It is Muslims and minorities as a whole. With your
16 help, as proud New Yorkers we can all do more to
17 create change in a non-discriminatory way that's for
18 all New Yorkers regardless of one's religious faith
19 or God. Thank you and God bless New York City.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. Your
21 life story is a tour through the neighborhoods of
22 Queens.

23 IVAN KAHN: [off mic] I grew up there.
24 (sic)

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: It was great.

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Thank you very much. They work in Brooklyn as well.

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MALE SPEAKER: Yes, yes, it does.

5

[laughs]

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Speaking of

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Queens,

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KAZIA FOUZIA: Good afternoon. My name

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is Kazia Fouzia. I'm the minister of organizing in

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DRUM, Desis Up and Moving. DRUM is a 16 year-old

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citizens' organization of 2,900 low-income South

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Asians fighting for their rights as immigrant youth,

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workers and as community of color like myself. The

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majority of our members are mostly a significant

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number from Bangladesh. I have been seriously

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concerned with the anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and

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anti-races rhetoric on the rights to our-the country.

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We have seen the city's attack on Muslims New Yorkers

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over the past few months. Some of these attacks may

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be immigrant and some of we are waiting to find out

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what. So, we deeply appreciate the effort behind

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this hearing, and the resolution of the support of

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elected officials including the City Council. While

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there is certainly an increase in some-in citizens,

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this is nothing new and not surprising. It is a

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2 logical consequence of the years of policies. We
3 have laid the path of suspicion and mistrust, but
4 it's about the lies (sic) of public policy decision
5 in making them they are criminalize our communities,
6 and about them they stain them. This use of
7 increasing solve every problem in communities. What
8 about them investing in our long-term health? We
9 spend unknown millions of wholesale sustenance (sic)
10 of Muslim communities with giving official levity of
11 anti-Muslim bills. There are countless informants
12 and undercover officers that are spying on student
13 workers who just lead that, and political advocacies
14 giving the indication that there is something wrong
15 with our community. But every [coughs] every day the
16 State Coalition of your cab drivers is to vendors see
17 communities as is New York. At the same time our
18 communities [bell] remain making up basic service and
19 programs for the lack of infrastructure of separate
20 living communities feeling like we are comforting—we
21 are comforting each other. Is there—is a decision
22 in policies is a reflection of our priorities. We
23 hope that respected elected officials will consider
24 our city's policies as a whole addition of this
25 resolution. If we really want to confront

1
2 Islamophobia and implementing some action, we have to
3 change our official policies around policing,
4 surveillance and the profiling.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
6 much all of you. I want to thank everyone who has
7 testified today for seeing beyond this resolution.
8 As somebody said earlier, voting for it is—is
9 relatively a simple act, but actually taking this
10 opportunity to look deeper about how we evaluate both
11 funding initiatives and—and—and legislation to
12 actually drill deeper and support communities is
13 something that would be a very good outcome in
14 addition to passing the resolution, which has already
15 passed the committee 9 to 0 and I suspect we'll enjoy
16 great support in a few days at the Stated Meeting.
17 So thank you all for being here, and testifying. We
18 have one last panel, and I believe we have Nazita
19 Oden [pause] and Adu Salam Mousa, and Sheikh Achmed
20 Barack. [background comments, pause] As long as the
21 red light is on, feel free to begin.

22 MALE SPEAKER: You before me.

23 MUZEDA ODEN: Good morning everyone. My
24 name is Muzeda Oden (sp?) on the subject the
25 Resolution 1230. Dear Honorable City Council, good

1
2 morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is Muzeda
3 Oden. I am American by heart, Muslim by state, and
4 proud to be a New Yorker. I am representing my
5 organization the Coalition Fund for Education and
6 Scholarship and Journey Safest. (sic) We work on the
7 day-to-day challenge the politicians American
8 communities have been facing over-against our work in
9 respect to influence education, immigration, worker
10 rights, voting rights, building a warrant, adding a
11 state grant, voting community for grants and so on.
12 Today, I am privileged to testify before the
13 honorable Committee on Cultural Affairs-Affairs,
14 Libraries and International Intergroup Relations and
15 extended thanks from our community for being extra
16 clearly on that that present issue, which has been
17 hurting millions of our citizens at the forefront of
18 the public. I am upset by gunshots that lay down to
19 our leaders of a Bangladeshi food mart (sic) but I
20 am-I am even more deeply disturbed by the deepening
21 silence in our public disclosure. I completely
22 understand that this has been raised to such an
23 extent that my neighbor, a wonderful lady in her 60s
24 wearing a Muslim cloth could be shot dead while
25 taking an afternoon stroll with her husband. How is

1
2 it that honorable, too, that I am a proud mother of
3 five young American men and women could become the
4 next victims. When I talk in our community [bell] I
5 see this similar thought haunting them desperately.
6 When our tearful sister returning home with a swollen
7 face being repeatedly ruled as ISIS or ruled the
8 oppression (sic) do you have bomb with you? It has
9 asked as a committee. The number of immigrants asked
10 that are asked sending the fear with expected bigotry
11 same as the race, are seen in our feeling alienated
12 and just targeting none. Groups are tireless to
13 install the idea Muslims do not belong here. This
14 alienation has brought the notice ISIS wants the
15 ambassadors of Islama fear and seemingly absolutely
16 permitted to assault American culture thoroughly
17 really did by the city and our experience the very
18 fabric of our society. However, I am believing New
19 York will not let us down agonist or me. It is seen
20 out of fear. The leaders will withstand the plan and
21 champion, really they surprise them and protect our
22 civil liberties in the very constitutional of our
23 good nation. The ability to worship a higher power
24 freely has been the cornerstone of our good nation.
25 We must be vigilant and never let that right be taken

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2 away from us. [bell] Due to that increased anger
3 seen and addressing that with assistance, tolerance,
4 understanding and love, our nation will become
5 stronger, and the constitutional that we all respect
6 and admit will become the guiding light for all of
7 our citizens even though they are citizens of color.
8 Thank you all.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

10 JAPPA MEDOUSA LA MOUSA: Good morning.

11 My name is Jappa Medousa La Mousa. I'd like to ask
12 your permission to read two different statements.
13 I'm here representing as the President of the
14 Southeast Queens Muslim Collective, and Member of the
15 Islamic Circle of North America. I would like to
16 read this statement. It's just brief from the
17 Islamic Circle of North America, and then read this
18 statement from the Southeast Queens Muslim Collective
19 with your permission.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure.

21 JAPPA MEDOUSA LA MOUSA: Thank you. The
22 Islamic Circle of North America, ICNA, is thankful to
23 the City Council for its continued support of the
24 Muslim community and its active campaign to end
25 Islamophobia. Due to the current political climate,

1
2 we have seen anti-Islam legislation, mosques being
3 denied permits and a rise in hate crimes against
4 Muslims throughout the nation. However, the City
5 Council has stood proudly with Muslims welcoming us
6 into this nation and making us feel us at home. For
7 that, we are thankful. ICNA strongly supports the
8 anti-Islamophobia Resolution that the City Council is
9 discussing here today. Specifically the resolution
10 calls for the support for Muslim communities
11 affirming their religious pluralism of-of the United
12 States, and urging all of our residents to stand
13 together for peace and understanding. If only
14 political candidates in our country has this sort of
15 wisdom when [pause] when dealing with a minority
16 group. I wasn't going to read this part because this
17 is not me, but this is someone that I hold quite
18 dearly to me, and I happen to know this for a fact.
19 As a father of four, I have raised my children to be
20 proud New Yorkers, proud Americans, and proud
21 Muslims. My children have grown up to live [bell]
22 the American dream. They all went to school here,
23 and employed to work everyday for a brighter
24 tomorrow. For myself, I came here with very little.
25 I dedicated my life to non-profit work for the

1
2 community, and hoping our community grow and feel a
3 part of overall American community. Have there been
4 challenges? Absolutely. As Americans we must stand
5 together to stamp out hate and continue to build a
6 brighter future for all of our children.

7 And this from the Secretary-General of
8 Islamic Circle of North America. My name is Medousa
9 La Mousa. I'm a resident of New York in the borough
10 of Queens. I am here in capacity as the President as
11 the President of the Southeast Queens Muslim
12 Collective to state that we condemn Islamophobia. As
13 an African-American Muslim whose history includes my
14 ancestors being brought here to America as slaves. I
15 recognize my immigrant brothers and sisters, and now
16 experiencing the hate African-Americans have endured
17 because of our race and our roots in Africa. For
18 them, it is because of their religion, and that they
19 have come from another land to America. Because were
20 are one in our belief and the first Africans to
21 arrive here so many centuries ago were Muslims.
22 African-American Muslims are also experiencing and
23 confronting Islamophobia. We cannot separate
24 ourselves from it. We know where it comes from. It
25 is a hatred that is being spewed by right wing bigots

1
2 in our country. It should not and will not be
3 tolerated of our willingness. (sic) Since September
4 11th, all Muslims have been targeted. We, as a
5 group, have been harassed, framed, and profiled. We
6 African-Americans have endured this behavior in one
7 form or another since we have been here. According
8 to the Center for American Progress, there are seven
9 organizations that have spent \$42.6 million between
10 the years 2001 to 2009 to support anti-Muslim
11 rhetoric. I suspect that some of the people who
12 compromise in these seven organizations may be
13 parents of children. I am a parent, and a
14 grandparent. Children are innocent until the
15 intentional actions of some determined adults in the
16 lying, antagonize and promote hate against Muslims,
17 which includes and impacts our children. There are
18 many Muslim children who are being subject to
19 bullying and ostracism in schools. Many of whom are
20 also witnessing their parents' fearful reactions to
21 being treated with suspicion, disregard and most
22 unfortunately sometimes being attacked physically.
23 Some of the hateful campaigns have occurred in New
24 York City, but they should no longer. Islamophobia
25 cannot be treated with blinders and/or a lack of

1
2 foresight for the damaged it inflicts across all
3 communities that weaken our society's values as a
4 nation. We are in agreement that all Muslim
5 communities should be respected and be in harmony
6 with their non-Muslim neighbors. IF we are to
7 continue to build a strong America, there must be
8 support for the Islamic communities, and that as such
9 we should respect the values that America and
10 Americans claim that being one nation under God with
11 liberty and justice for all. We look forward to the
12 passage of this resolution, and what actions may
13 follow that bring all New Yorkers and rid themselves
14 of the underpinning roots of Islamophobia that will
15 make us a better city and a better nation, the Lord
16 willing. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
18 much. We will hear from the third panelist and then
19 we've been joined by a fourth panelist Imontele
20 Turashid (sp?) I believe who will speak last. Thank
21 you very much. We'll try to adhere to the two-minute
22 time limit as much as possible.

23 SHAIKH AHMED BARUCH: Good-good day good
24 afternoon. I would assume that it would certainly be
25 the afternoon.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Not quite.

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SHAIKH AHMED BARUCH: Thank you very much,
Councilman Brander. Thank you all for this
opportunity for our community. I was planning to
tell you that he was supposed to be here speaking on
behalf of the Islamic Leadership Council of New
York, which is the oldest umbrella of Muslim mosques
and Muslim organizations in the United States and
the largest, and it has just happened to be in New
York when, which tells us today that this is the
right place for Muslims, and our Muslims to be in
New York. So he's here and has the testimony, the-
on behalf of the Organization. I would just then
speak for myself, and notion that I was so happy to
go to the United States and accept to live here. I
wasn't forced to come. I refused to come to the
country for many years. I had the opportunity.
Americans think that everybody wants to go to the
United States. Well, I just signed on going to the
United States not to be treated the way I saw
Muslims treated after 9/11. No. Islamophobia is
real, and I can feel it in support of what you
just said about the education. My wife last year
asked some kids, Muslim kids in the Islamic school

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2 to write an essay about anything. About 80% of them
3 mentioned the name of Trump. Islamophobia is real
4 because and it's systemic now Islamophobia. It's no
5 longer something that happens in the states because
6 of the Muslims are tired of such systemic phenomena
7 that we have to deal with. [bell] Is that my time.

8

SHAIKH AHMED BARUCH: Yes, please.

9

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: It is your time.

10 If you'd like to wrap it up.

11

12 SHAIKH AHMED BARUCH: Because I never
13 wrap it up. So what I wanted to say about
14 Islamophobia and how it is—the root is that it is
15 felt in the—the way you saw the kids express
16 themselves. It's felt in another way that—that
17 this—this candidate made our job very hard. I am
18 trying to convince my kids not to hate him, and to
19 hate his name. In the name of the good behind him
20 because they know it. I don't know how they—they
21 know that. They know the—the name of the party and
22 the name of the people behind Trump because Trump is
23 not alone, and at the same time we did not let them
24 see the last debate my kids because we did not want
25 them to—to—to just to learn about all of that
poisonous stuff there. The other thing is the

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systemic, this is Islamophobia here. We noticed that still the system, the public budget of—of New York just the budget, the public budget of New York the public policies that are adopted in new York kind of almost excluded the Muslim community or give it a very small share of everything even the public hiring, the public appointments, public mainly for non-profits. If you have that name, you have that appearance, you have that accent, go to the non-profit sector. Don't try to work for the public or— or ask for public money or try to get a contract.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

SHAIKH AHMED BARUCH: That, you will finish that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much, and last, but certainly not least to wrap up this hearing and we've been rejoined by Council Member Miller, of course.

SHAIKH AHMED BARUCH: Great. Thank you so much. Peace belong to everyone so I'll say good morning. It's still morning. [coughs] So you have the—the details of our statement from the Islamic Leadership Council in front of you. So I would just like to summarize a couple of points in the brief

1
2 time allotted. The first one is that's been six
3 years now since the Islamic Leadership Council of New
4 York held a conference right here in New York City,
5 and during which we really launched the use of the
6 term Islamophobia in New York and in America. The
7 conference was attended by Muslim leaders from across
8 the country. So yes naturally we certainly support
9 this resolution number 1230, and [coughs] we feel
10 that it's definitely appropriate. At that time and
11 at this time, we expressed a dual concern for
12 understanding Islamophobia as the fermenting of fear
13 in the environment or irrational fear, not rational
14 fear, but also of bigotry. Many times I'm concerned
15 that when we start talking about phobias that we
16 overlook that at their heart there's an intolerance
17 and a bigotry, and so our concern is bigotry directed
18 towards Islam as a religion and Muslims. Our country
19 is always at its worst when it gives into the
20 permissibility of bigotry whether it is Catholics,
21 Jews, Blacks and Chinese. It does not matter, and
22 there are people and the details of this are in front
23 of you who form organizations that foment bigotry
24 against Islam and Muslims. Two of those individuals,
25 Pamela Geller [bell] and Robert Spencer, are New

1
2 Yorkers, and between the two of them they have
3 created several organizations that have been
4 identified as hate groups in America that have
5 created problems for all of us New Yorkers that I'm
6 sure you've heard about, during the course of this
7 day. And so, lastly, you know, having said that, and
8 once again repeating I think it's worth repeating
9 that every time these ugly incidents have emerged in
10 New York it has been the City Council of New York
11 that has been very forthright in—in speaking out
12 against hate speech, speaking out against bigotry,
13 against anyone including Muslims. And so, having
14 said that lastly and as an addendum, that you have in
15 front of you, I want to just mention that by
16 definition bigotry is not only directed against
17 groups of people but against ideas. And the last
18 time that I was here for the very contentious BDS
19 hearings, a member of the City Council, Councilman
20 Lancman (sic), pointed to myself and other panelists,
21 and over a political disagreement identified us as
22 being anti-Jewish, Anti-Semitic. I consider that
23 bigotry. I was particularly offended by his comments
24 because I have a 25-year record of work in this city
25 that was interfaith, multi-faith. There have been

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2 incidents that have occurred at which the Jewish
3 community have been the center. I've been right
4 there on the scene, and so for a member of this--of
5 this body to identify me as being, you know, Anti-
6 Semitic because he and I disagree on something, is
7 intolerant. It's beneath the character and the
8 spirit of this body, and I believe and many of us
9 believe that that particular Council person he owes
10 me an apology. He owes us an apology, and--and it's
11 our expectation that the Council will speak to its
12 members when their commitment to the issues and their
13 own passion crosses the line into intolerance, and
14 thank you all for your time, and peace be unto you
15 all.

16 MS. GUDEN: Thank you, honorable as
17 you've given me a couple of times I can explain what
18 I am--I was under attack. This year was the highest
19 Bangladeshi community was killed by hate crimes. My
20 aunt was killed a couple of weeks ago by hate crimes
21 in Jamaica, and the last two last to Cruz (sic)
22 Hospital because he was--his names it was and is
23 Mahamed, and he was treated in the waiting room and
24 he had two strokes in there because his name is
25 Mahamed that mass fatalities is winked because of

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2 Mahamed. He did not take him inside. Still he's
3 swelling, his face was swelling, and he didn't, and
4 now he's at home, and dealing with his face because
5 of his Mahamed name. And a couple of and a monster
6 almost one and a half months ago two Bangladeshi
7 imams was shot. You know that. Jamaica. Then like
8 my time was. (sic) Then Muslim brother Mahamed and I
9 was in February, last February I did one these jobs
10 day at City Hall its steps. When I go to my home or
11 to heading to my home, and I saw two of the men was
12 following me, and when I stop at the stop sign, and I
13 saw one, a big girl taking out card and my glasses
14 gone. When I back up the side, I saw the apartment
15 that me, and this is the way I called NYPD, and when
16 I reached home I called the NYPD, and they said my
17 dispenser is not dated. (sic) I said no I saw you,
18 and so then they arrived 11:30 p.m. I said if I
19 killed that then you will be coming? He said, you
20 know, ma'am, you have—we have the city of more
21 emergencies before we was there. We took care of
22 them. I said my dear, I was still left and let it—I
23 was not killed. That is why you are late. This is
24 the situation we are dealing with that. NYPD,
25 community, and everything. That is why it's toler-

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2 and tolerance cannot be accepted as the tolerance.

3 This is my issue.

4

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
5 much Ms. Guden. You raised some very serious issues
6 there, and I thank you all for being here and—and I
7 wasn't there to witness the exchange that you spoke,
8 but I will just say I'm very proud to be a part of
9 this Council, which is very progressive. It is an
10 incredible body that I think is moving us in the
11 right way virtually all the time. Even though there
12 are just three of us here right now, we actually
13 speak to part of the diversity of the City of New
14 York having a Muslim and Jew and a gay Catholic from
15 Queens. This is who we are, and I'm very proud of—of
16 a lot of what we accomplish together as I am proud of
17 this resolution going through my committee. So I
18 would offer Council Member Miller an opportunity to—
19 to close, this being his resolution, but I just want
20 to thank the four panelists before me, but everyone
21 here today for coming before the committee and
22 speaking so passionately about the resolution and
23 clearly about some of the broader issues of
24 Islamophobia that we are facing as a nation.

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MALE SPEAKER: We thank you.

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MS. GUDEN: Thank you. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

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MS. GUDEN: I really thank the committee
a lot.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so much
Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the members of the
committee. We look forward to continuing to vote
that has begun here today and shout out that it has
been a real journey. Not necessarily the challenge
that folks see before us. The challenge lies ahead
of us. I want to thank the members of the—the
conference for assisting advancing this resolution as
well as an important document for the world to see.
And certainly we don't do this by ourselves certainly
as—as—as the Chairman says as the lone member as the
lone member of—of the City Council. Certainly this
as well as the other legislation public policies that
address the needs of the Muslim Community don't give
them because of me, and that is a collective. And so
I want to thank everyone for being a part of this
coalition of people who seek justice. On the side of
the table and advocates and the leadership, I'd like
to thank the—the—the Speaker of the New York City
Council for her leadership and her haste to put this

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2 together and ensuring that this happens. And one
3 person in particular who stands in the back, and Fiza
4 Alli, there for her work, and that she continues to
5 do and the support that she brings to the Council
6 and—and we are grateful for that and the opportunity
7 to really once again highlight the true faces of
8 Islam and the contributions that are being made to
9 this city on a day in and day out basis. And I think
10 t hat this resolution once again and frankly affirms
11 our commitment to this community, our community for
12 peace and justice throughout the city. And that as
13 Imam said that any time that there are issues whether
14 they are anti-Jewish or—or anything that—that
15 members, folks that are in this room have been the
16 scene, and will be—continue to take the high road in
17 being on the scene. And so in spite the incinerated
18 rhetoric that is—has—has grown, we—we do not reject
19 ideologies simp—simply we reject the simple thought
20 that we're denounce individuals because of that.
21 That is not who we are. We continue to take the high
22 road, and build upon what we have here today. So I'm
23 thankful for everyone who comes out. Thank you for
24 the opportunity to hear this resolution and—and
25 really as we said before we don't fix it if we don't

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talk about, and the opportunity to engage our
community and our city in this way. And so I want to
thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I also want to
thank the two women to my right and left. Aminta
Kilawan is our counsel to the committee and Chloe
Rivera is our Analyst, and I know she's a little
under the weather today as am I. So, we're both
going to go get a cup of tea and--

MALE SPEAKER: And you need some healing
prayer.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes, amen, and I
also just want to say, and I'm sure Council Member
Miller has something to do with this. There are a
lot of folks from my beloved borough of Queens who
are here today. SO want to say thank you to al of
the folks from Queens, Southeast Queens, Jamaica for
being present today. So, as everyone knows, we've
passed this resolution out of my committee 9 to
nothing. It now goes onto the full Council in the
Stated Meeting in a couple of days where I am sure it
will pass. So, with that, thank you all very, very
much and this meeting is adjourned. [gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date October 22, 2016