



MUSLIM PUBLIC  
AFFAIRS COUNCIL

January 30, 2024

The Honorable Nasser Paydar  
Assistant Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Assistant Secretary Paydar,

It was wonderful to meet you, and thank you for the opportunity to share our work.

As we discussed, I have listed a series of recommendations that we feel must be included by the White House as part of their National Strategy to Counter Islamophobia. The importance of these recommendations is especially critical right now as American Muslim students are facing an unprecedented torrent of hate both online and in person.

Most concerning have been charges levied by lawmakers and leaders in civil society claiming pro-peace and pro-Palestinian students are Hamas sympathizers or are being supported by Russia or other foreign adversaries and must be investigated by federal authorities.

These baseless allegations have created a McCarthyist atmosphere, one that is destroying the lives of countless students across the country.

We look forward to working together to ensure the safety and security of American Muslim students.

Sincerely,

Mohammad H. Ali

Director of Government Relations

Muslim Public Affairs Council



**Explicit Anti-Islamophobia Policies:**

- Establish and enforce clear definitions of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bullying in educational institutions.
- Develop and disseminate protocols for addressing and preventing Islamophobic incidents, ensuring consistency in implementation across K-12 and higher education.

**Islamophobia Awareness Campaign:**

- Develop and implement a comprehensive Islamophobia Awareness Campaign to educate educators, students, parents, and school communities about the alarming rise of Islamophobia, and provide tools to address it.

**Open Channels of Communication:**

- Provide guidance to schools to encourage students to report incidents of bullying, harassment, or doxxing— which has become a major issue during the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- Support schools in creating environments where students feel safe and supported in coming forward with concerns, whether in a public or anonymous reporting system.

**Safe Reporting Mechanisms:**

- Create confidential channels for reporting incidents of Islamophobia, including but not limited to doxing, intimidation, verbal harassment, stalking, simple assault, and aggravated assault.
- Ensure that these reporting mechanisms are easily accessible and widely communicated to the American Muslim community.

**Counseling and Support Services:**

- Ensure schools provide adequate counseling and support services for students affected by the conflict.

**Proactive Measures:**

- Develop plans to provide training on online safety, privacy, and security measures, equipping students with tools to protect themselves against online harassment and threats.
- Implement a system for regular and systematic policy reviews to assess the effectiveness of anti-Islamophobia measures.
- Improve policies based on feedback from students, parents, educators, and community organizations, to ensure policies remain responsive to evolving needs and challenges.



**Monitoring and Enforcement:**

- Establish mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of anti-Islamophobia policies across educational institutions.
- Collaborate with organizations like ACLU and Palestine Legal to strengthen advocacy efforts.

**Create training program:**

- Using examples of past discriminatory practices, create a curriculum based on identifying why the practice was considered discriminatory and the impact it has on students and how to ensure it doesn't continue.

**Protecting Students' Safety and Wellbeing:**

Elected officials, civil society organizations and others have used their platforms to accuse students of being terrorist sympathizers, question their loyalty to the United States and used considerable resources to cause significant personal and professional harm.

- Universities must create an office dedicated to the best interests of students in the face of such attacks.
- Office to include
  - Coordination with other universities
  - Collaboration with student organizations
  - Alumni outreach
  - Relationships with law enforcement at all levels
  - Relationships with major employers to ensure line of communication is maintained