

MEDIA ADVISORY

Chicago and Suburban Organizations Rally Against Islamophobia

United We Stand or Divided We Fall

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Evanston, IL, December 11, 2015 – Nearly a dozen organizations from across Chicagoland will gather Tuesday, December 15 at 5pm in Evanston’s Fountain Square (Sherman Ave and Church St) to stand united against Islamophobia and the rise of hate filled rhetoric that has been growing in the national political dialogue.

The Chicago office of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-Chicago) has received an [unprecedented amount of concern](#) from Chicagoland’s Muslim communities expressing fear and reporting harassment, especially from more traditionally dressed Muslims.

The rally will be held the night of the Republican debate since the most Islamophobic sentiment has been expressed by candidates, most prominently Donald Trump and Ben Carson. The gathering, however, is aimed at all political candidates and elected officials, regardless of party affiliation.

“The City of Chicago is a testament to the value of an open and diverse society,” said Renner Larson, Communications Coordinator at CAIR-Chicago. “In our skyline we have Trump Tower, a name that over the past few weeks has become synonymous with Islamophobia and bigotry, yet as pinnacles in the same skyline stand the John Hancock Building and Willis Tower, whose architect, Fazlur Khan, was an American-Muslim of the very kind Donald Trump wants to keep out. We must not only live out our American values by making this country a safe place for Muslims, but we must recognize that this country is a richer place because American-Muslims are citizens of it.”

“We are living in a time of [great anxiety over racial, religious and gender differences](#),” said organizer Lesley Williams of Evanston. “Yet there are millions across the country and the world with a fierce desire to focus on what unites us rather than what divides. When we read about historical atrocities like the Holocaust or Rwanda, we ask, ‘How could good people let this happen? Why didn’t anyone do anything?’ My hope is that tonight’s action will be the first of many Stands Against Islamophobia, as good people refuse to let bigotry triumph”.

“Today, we are all Muslims,” said Gail Schechter, Executive Director of Open Communities, the north suburban area’s premier voice for just, inclusive and diverse communities. “We are unequivocally committed to standing in solidarity with all who suffer acts of aggression and discrimination simply because of their religion, and by extension, their country of origin, race, ability and gender identity. We are proud to gather together. We are the people who are being vigilant - in good times and bad - to make sure that our human rights and civil rights are enforced not just for some Americans but for all people.”

WHAT:

#StandWithMuslims, Stand Against Islamophobia

WHEN:

Tuesday, December 15, 2015 at 5:00pm

WHERE:

Evanston Fountain Square, Evanston IL 60201

SPEAKERS:

Gabriel Machabanski of Open Communities
Renner Larson of CAIR-Chicago
Bushra Amiwala, Niles North student
Rev Michael Nabors of Second Baptist Church

Tahera Ahmad, chaplain and Director of Interfaith Engagement at Northwestern University will offer a blessing.

Co-Sponsors:

American Friends Service Committee
Beth Emet, the Free Synagogue
Chicago Area Peace Action (CAPA)
Council on American Islamic Relations - Chicago (CAIR)
Evanston Neighbors for Peace
Interfaith Action of Evanston
Lake Street Church of Evanston
Jewish Voice for Peace Chicago
Northshore Coalition for Peace, Justice and the Environment
Open Communities
Second Baptist Church of Evanston
YWCA Evanston/North Shore

-END-

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