

AMERICA INDIVISIBLE AND  
THE SHOULDER TO SHOULDER CAMPAIGN

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An American's Digital Guide To  
**ALLYSHIP THROUGH  
CIVIC ACTION**



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UPDATED: NOVEMBER 2019



# HOW TO BE A CIVICALLY ACTIVE ALLY

What does allyship look like in the fight against anti-Muslim bigotry? In the aftermath of major conflicts and crises you might stand in solidarity with your Muslim neighbors at a peace vigil. In response to an act of hate or vandalism at a local mosque or gurdwara, you might volunteer to clean up or donate funds to restore the houses of worship of the Muslim or Sikh communities. These acts of allyship, in the wake of tragedies, are often captured in the news. What may go unnoticed are the many ways allyship is lived out, behind the scenes, through civic action.

This [digital, clickable guide](#) to Allyship through Civic Action offers models of civic action that can build community resilience in the fight against anti-Muslim bigotry. Let us know how we can improve this resource. Use it, share it, and tell us about how you live out these ideals. America Indivisible and the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign are coalition efforts, and we are together in this cause.

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## EXPLICIT ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY IN CIVIC ARENAS

Bigotry and hate aimed at communities that are perceived to be Muslim may include:

- Violent attacks against Muslims, Arabs, Sikhs, South Asians, communities of African descent
- Public and street harassment
- Bullying in schools and workplaces
- Anti-Muslim statements on social media
- Normalized Anti-Muslim bigotry in the news and entertainment





### IN THE CIVIC ARENA, ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY MAY BE SUBTLE

- **Exclusion** of Muslims, Sikhs, and other communities perceived to be Muslim from leadership positions in community organizations. Example: The Mayor hosts a prayer breakfast but does not invite the local mosque and gurdwara leaders to offer prayers while inviting Christian and Jewish leaders to do so.
- **Limited to no outreach** of public officials to communities impacted by anti-Muslim hate. Example: A city council member repeatedly declines to attend an event at the local Muslim and Arab-American led private school in her ward.
- **Deliberate ignorance** of cultural and religious values of communities perceived to be Muslim by community members. Example: The Governor makes no mention of Sikh and Muslim holidays on his twitter account while acknowledging the religious observances of other faith communities.
- **Reinforcing stereotypes** of impacted communities as security risks. Example: The only times the Governor reaches out to local Muslims is to convene meetings on violent extremism, countering terrorism, or addressing immigration policy.

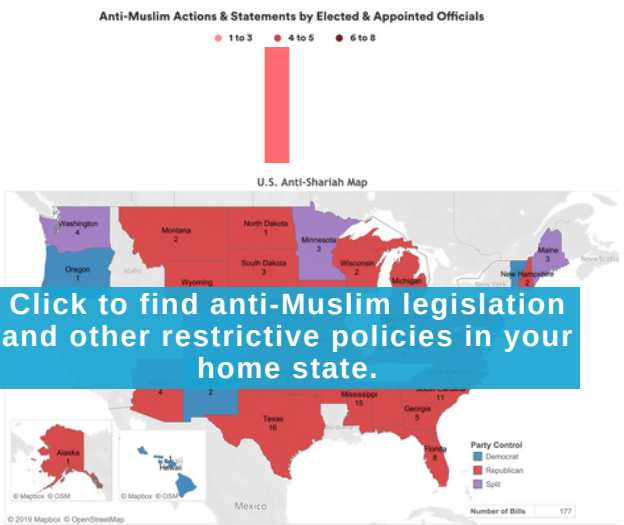
OCTOBER 22, 2018  
Issue: Fighting Bigotry

## New Report Documents Nationwide Spread and Failure of Anti-Muslim 2018 & 2017 Campaigns

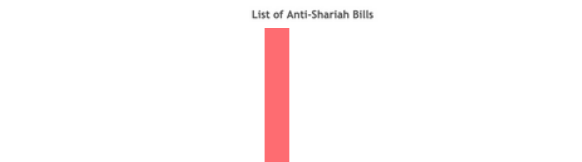
### IN POLICYMAKING AND CIVIC SPACES, ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY MAY BE VERY EXPLICIT



Click to find anti-Muslim actions and statements by elected and appointed officials in your home state.



Click to find anti-Muslim legislation and other restrictive policies in your home state.



### State And Local Republican Officials Have Been Bashing Muslims. We Counted.

A BuzzFeed News analysis found that Republican officials in 49 states have openly attacked Muslims with words and proposed legislation since 2015, and few have faced repercussions.

**Hannah Allam**  
BuzzFeed News Reporter

**Tala Ansari**  
BuzzFeed News Reporter

Posted on April 10, 2018, at 8:05 a.m. ET





### ALONGSIDE ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY IN CIVIC SPACES, AMERICANS OF MUSLIM FAITH ARE LEAST CONNECTED TO THEIR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

According to the National Conference on Citizenship, "Civic health is the way that communities are organized to define and address public problems." One indicator of civic health is direct outreach to one's government representatives.

A 2019 poll by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding found that Americans of Muslim faith were least engaged in outreach to their local and federal representatives in the previous 12 months, compared to other faith groups. Muslim Americans were the least civically healthy.

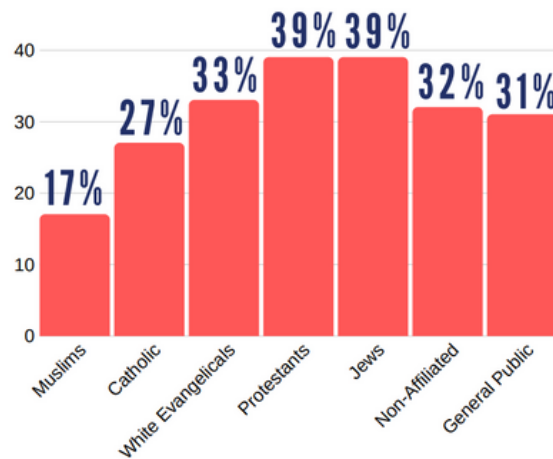
#### ALLYSHIP THROUGH CIVIC ACTION

Knowledge of and relationships with Americans of Muslim faith can make an impact on anti-Muslim bigotry.

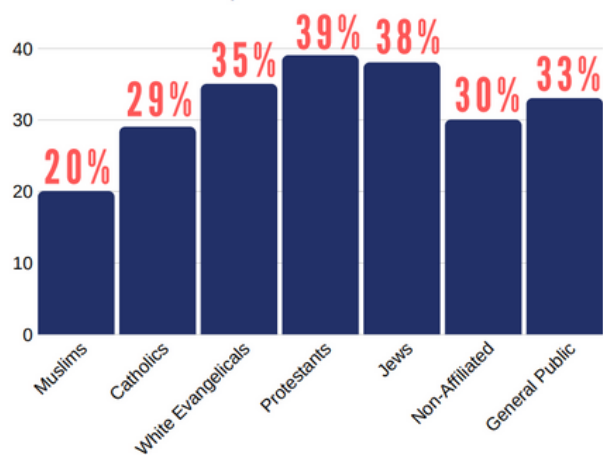
"Knowing a Muslim personally is among several protective factors against Islamophobia. When a Muslim is a close friend, Islamophobia is further reduced. We found that three in four Jews know a Muslim, about half of the general public know a Muslim, but only about one in three among white Evangelicals know an American who is Muslim." (ISPU, 2019)

Consider deepening that impact by helping to build the civic health of your neighbors who may be impacted by anti-Muslim bigotry.

Have you met or communicated by email, phone or mail with your Federal elected congressional representative or their staff within the last year?



Have you met or communicated by email, phone or mail with your locally elected representatives or their staff within the last year?



How does this compare to your own communities?



## START BY CHECKING YOUR CIVIC HEALTH, AND BUILDING OTHERS'

Ask yourself: In the last three months, which of the following activities have I done?

- **Volunteered** in my community.
- **Spoken** to my neighbor.
- **Offered** to help my neighbor with something.
- **Fixed** a local problem with my neighbor.
- **Attended** a public meeting with a local institution, agency or organization.
- **Read** about a local government initiative or effort.
- **Directly contacted** a local government official or office.
- **Made a commitment** to do a public or political action.
- **Talked in person** about public and political issues with my family or friends.
- **Talked online** about public and political issues with my family or friends.

Then, consider taking one of your neighbors along to share in the above activities.

## TIPS FOR CIVICALLY ACTIVE ALLIES

### Tip #1 - Lend your mic

“You will find that your Muslim neighbor shares much the same joys and concerns as you. Your Muslim neighbor will also be grateful to you for having reached out.” Ilhan Cagri, Muslim Public Affairs Council

Your neighbors may struggle to get the attention of their government representatives when inviting them to come by the community center or attend an event. Offer to share your access to public leaders by passing on invitations from Muslim, Sikh, Arab, South Asian, and African community members. You may have relationships with public officials that these communities do not.

### Tip #2 - Each one, bring one

“To be an ally is to be embedded in a web of relationships that close the gaps of differences, and that blur the lines between you and I, and between your community and my community, without diminishing the significance of our differences.” Brie Loskota, USC Center for Religion and Civil Culture

Planning on attending the next city council meeting? Bring along a neighbor who may be impacted by anti-Muslim bigotry. Civic actions can have ripple effects if you bring those along who may not yet be engaged in these practices.

### Tip #3 - Make space

“A good ally uses their influence, their time, and their means to help assist more marginalized members of their community.” Margari Hill, Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative

Do you serve on a local committee or board? Look around the table and see who’s missing. Find ways to get your Muslim, Sikh, and other neighbors involved in local associations. Let them know about opportunities and advocate for more seats for diverse perspectives at the table.



# FURTHER READING



**What It Means to Be a Fearless Ally**



**I Want to Reach Out to My Muslim Neighbor; How Do I Get Started?**



**Being A Good Ally**



**Want to Be an Ally for People of Different Faiths? Here's What Not to Do**



**Three Ways to be an Ally to Muslims**



**Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign Resources**



**America Indivisible Digital Guides**



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HOW DO YOU BUILD  
THE CIVIC HEALTH OF  
YOUR NEIGHBORS?

SEND YOUR ADDITIONS TO  
ADMIN@AMERICAINDIVISIBLE.ORG AND  
INFO@S2SCAMPAIGN.ORG



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