

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council,

On behalf of AJC and the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council, we extend our best wishes to you and yours for a happy holiday season and New Year.

The Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council has decided it is time to reverse the rise of hate crimes in our country. The bill in Congress we are supporting, the *Protecting Religiously Affiliated Institutions Act*, passed the House by an overwhelming majority, and is poised to pass the Senate. We formed six regional councils to serve as platforms for community-level engagement.

Because of friends like you, AJC and the Council is able to be an effective advocate for domestic policy issues of common concern to the American Jewish and American Muslim communities, and the entire country. With our deep appreciation of your friendship and support, we wish you a happy holiday season.

Bob Silverman, U.S. Director of Muslim-Jewish Relations
Natalia Mahmud, Assistant Director, U.S. Muslim-Jewish Relations

Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council Urges Congress to Strengthen the Response to Hate Crimes across the United States



In February, the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council visited Capitol Hill and met with dozens of Republican and Democratic members of the House and Senate to raise awareness about the Council and mission. We urged lawmakers to strengthen the country's response to the increase in hate crimes across the U.S., especially those targeting Muslim and Jewish communities.

Following these meetings, the Council drafted and circulated a sign-on letter to Senators calling them to urge the U.S. Department of Justice to reaffirm its role in enforcing hate crimes laws. The bipartisan leadership of the Senate Judiciary Committee, led by Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) signed the letter. It called on Attorney General Sessions for a reaffirmation of the Justice Department’s role in enforcing hate crimes laws. This led to a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on hate crimes in April.

Support Legislation to Expand Coverage of Federal Hate Crime Laws

In June, the Council issued a “Call to Action” to urge elected representatives to support the bipartisan *Protecting Religiously Affiliated Institutions Act* of 2017. The bill amends the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996, which makes attacks on houses of worship a federal crime. The amendment encompasses threats against – in addition to intentional damage to – those institutions, as well bring into its scope all religiously affiliated institutions. Supporters of the Council sent over 2,000 letters to their members of Congress and we met with members of Congress to urge passage. On December 11, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the bill with an overwhelming bipartisan majority of 402-2. The Council is now working with Senators from both parties to pass the companion bill.

The latest *Hate Crimes Statistics* report released by the FBI in November shows an increase of 4.6 percent in hate crime incidents in 2016 compared to 2015. Anti-Jewish incidents remain the majority of all religious-based hate crimes, while anti-Muslim incidents rose nearly 20 percent over 2015. Passing this legislation sends a signal of zero tolerance for hate crimes against people of faith.

Interacting with Jewish and Muslim Communities to Further the Council’s Mission



The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., hosted the Council in June for a public program highlighting recent trips of U.S. Imams to Auschwitz, together with an inspiring talk by Council Member Senator Joe Lieberman.



In October, the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council came to Detroit, Michigan, for our sixth face-to-face meeting. Senior officials from the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Eastern District of Michigan briefed the Council on hate crimes prosecution in Michigan. Council members visited the Arab American National Museum, celebrated the completion of a mosaic project by a diverse group of students at the Northwest Activities Center (formerly the site of a Jewish Community Center). The Council hosted an evening town hall for the Michigan Muslim Community Council (MMCC) and the Jewish Community Relations Council/AJC of Detroit.

A 2014 public opinion survey, *Building a Shared Future: Understanding the Muslim and Jewish Communities of Southeast Michigan*, revealed high levels of interest in learning more about the other, finding ways to experience each community's practices and customs, and engaging in joint activities. The survey, co-sponsored by AJC, MMCC, and the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, was carried out by the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Launched Six Local Muslim-Jewish Advisory Councils



The Council now has six regional branches. The planned expansion of the Council locally comes amidst a marked rise in incidences of hate speech and crimes, notably the neo-Nazi, white

supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, the bombing of a Minneapolis mosque, and threats to Jewish synagogues. Each regional Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council brings together business, professional, civil society and religious leaders from the two communities.

AJC has partnered with other organizations, in addition to ISNA, to form regional Muslim-Jewish Councils in:

- Los Angeles
- Philadelphia
- Dallas
- South Florida
- New York
- Washington, DC

Upcoming Events

January 12: Meeting of the national Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council. Hosted by Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York.

January 15: Meeting of the Dallas/Fort Worth Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council. Hosted by ISNA Dallas and AJC Dallas.

January 22: Meeting of the Philadelphia Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council, Circle of Friends. Hosted by the Nationalities Service Center.

January 31: Meeting of the New York Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council. Hosted by Hogan Lovells.

February 11: Meeting of the Washington Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council with Rep. Raskin (D-MD). Hosted by ADAMS Center and AJC Washington.

Media Highlights

[*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*](#) noted the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council's statement on passage of the House bill, *Protecting Religiously Affiliated Institutions Act of 2017*. *Bloomberg Government* highlighted the Council as the only group actively supporting the bill.

BGOV Bill Summary: H.R. 1730, Destroying Religious Property (1)

By Margaret Lawrynowicz | December 11, 2017 04:28PM ET | Bloomberg Government

Group Positions

The Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council SUPPORTED the committee-approved version of the bill.

"Burning down a mosque or vandalizing a Jewish cemetery is intolerable," the group said in a [statement](#). "Now is the time to take action against hate crimes in our country."

The [Detroit Free Press](#) featured the Council's trip to Detroit, MI in October.

Ahead of the Council's reception on Capitol Hill in February, [USA Today](#) covered the Council's mission.

[NPR](#) interviewed the Council's Co-Chair, Farooq Kathwari and AJC's Robert Silverman in December of last year.