



Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council Praises President Trump for Signing Bill to Protect Religious Institutions

October 4, 2018 – New York -- The Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council thanks President Trump for signing the Protecting Religiously Affiliated Institutions Act of 2018.

Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement to monitor and prosecute hate crimes has been a top priority of the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council since it was established in November 2016. The Council regularly met with members of Congress, advocating for passage of this law, which builds upon the groundbreaking Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996.

The new law expands coverage of federal hate crimes laws to include synagogues, mosques and other religious institutions, such as schools and community centers. It clarifies that threats against, as well as acts that result in damage to, religious institutions are covered under federal law. Individuals who make these threats now face penalties of up to three years imprisonment.

According to the latest FBI report, issued in 2017, anti-Jewish incidents comprise the majority of all religious hate crimes, while anti-Muslim incidents rose nearly 20 percent over 2015.

“This significant law clarifies that any attacks infringing on religious freedom will not be tolerated in our country and gives law enforcement the tools to prosecute those responsible for religiously-motivated hate crimes,” said Farooq Kathwari, Co-Chair of the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council.

The Council praised Senators Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Dianne Feinstein (D-California), and Representatives David Kustoff (R-Tennessee) and Derek Kilmer (D-Washington) for introducing the legislation and their leadership in securing its successful adoption by Congress. The Senate unanimously adopted the bipartisan measure last month and the House of Representatives overwhelmingly adopted a similar measure in December 2017.

"Solid bipartisan support for this law confirms that at the highest levels of our government protecting religious freedom is a non-partisan issue and all Americans have equal protection," said Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council Co-Chair Stanley Bergman.

The Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council, founded nearly two years ago, brings together 46 civil society, religious, and business leaders from across the United States to advocate for domestic policy issues of common concern. The American Jewish Committee (AJC) and the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) are its co-conveners. The Council has eight regional affiliates across the United States, in Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, South Florida, and Washington, D.C.