

Muslim-Jewish Coalition Applauds the Bipartisan and Bicameral Introduction of the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act

April 8, 2021 – New York – The Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council (MJAC) praises the bipartisan and bicameral introduction of the Jabara-Heyer National Opposition to Hate, Assaults, and Threats to Equality (NO HATE) Act, to help address the massive underreporting of hate crimes in the United States. The bill was introduced in the House by Representatives Don Beyer (D-VA), Vern Buchanan (R-FL), Judy Chu (D-CA), and Fred Upton (R-MI). It was introduced in the Senate by Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Jerry Moran (R-KS).

It is similar to the bill, strongly supported by MJAC, that the 116th House adopted last year.

Due to inaccurate and incomplete data, the U.S. Government lacks a full understanding of the national threat posed by hate crimes. Reporting to the FBI from local law enforcement agencies is not mandatory. In 2019, the FBI reported 7,314 hate crime incidents nationally, and 71 cities with a population of 100,000 residents or more reported zero hate crimes or did not submit any data. The FBI's annual Hate Crimes Statistics report clearly does not show a comprehensive picture of hate crimes taking place in the United States. Meanwhile, the Bureau of Justice Statistics asserts that the number may be as high as 250,000 per year.

“Muslims and Jews, like so many other minorities in America, have been subjected to increasing bias and violence in the past year,” said MJAC Co-Chair Stanley Bergman. “During the COVID-19 pandemic, the nation has seen a most disturbing and significant spike in hatred against the Asian-American community in particular. All of us must take action against hate.”

The NO HATE Act will incentivize state and local law enforcement authorities to improve hate crime reporting by making grants available for law enforcement trainings, reporting hotlines, resources to liaise with affected communities, and public educational forums on hate crimes. Grants will be authorized from existing funds and managed through the Department of Justice. The bill also amends the penalties for hate crimes to allow courts to require offenders to undertake educational classes or community service related to the victim's community as a condition of release.

“This bill will significantly improve how law enforcement responds to hate crime incidents,” said MJAC Co-chair Farooq Kathwari. “We are grateful to those members of Congress who showed true leadership in overcoming partisan divides to reintroduce the NO HATE Act together. Combating hate crimes, safeguarding, and protecting minorities is the responsibility of all Americans.”

MJAC is a civil society coalition co-convened by American Jewish Committee (AJC) and Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). Founded in 2016, MJAC brings together civil society, religious, and business leaders from across the U.S. to advocate for domestic policy issues of common concern. MJAC's national council and eleven regional councils, in Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Louisville, Miami, New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. represent a network of hundreds of Muslim and Jewish leaders committed to working together for the good of both communities and the country. MJAC stands at the forefront of those confronting hatred against religious minorities and has made stemming the rise in hate crimes a key advocacy area of focus.