

WE STAND WITH OUR MUSLIM NEIGHBORS

Muslims in America include those whose ancestors came here long before the Revolutionary War as well as more recent immigrants. Muslims in America are doctors, engineers, business owners, members of the military, taxpayers, law-abiding citizens and contributors to the well-being of our communities. They practice Islam in their homes, places of worship, and in service to the community - just as people of other faiths. They share the belief with Christians and Jews in a merciful, loving God and in loving one's neighbor as oneself.

Sadly, there are groups in the United States that are spreading lies about Islam to stir up fear and hatred. ACT FOR AMERICA, the largest of the grassroots anti-Muslim organizations and classified as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, is sponsoring rallies and marches in cities across the country on June 10 to stir up fear that Muslims are seeking to impose their religion on America and change our democratic way of life where freedom of religion is a basic value. (see: islamophobicnetwork.com) These "anti-Sharia" events, under the guise of fighting for human rights, actually oppose the rights of Muslims to practice their religion. "Sharia simply means me practicing things like praying five times a day, me being kind to my parents, repelling evil with

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good," said Aneelah Afzali, director of the American Muslim Empowerment Network of the Muslim Association of Puget Sound. You can find out more about what Muslims actually believe at www.islamfactcheck.org.

Faith communities across Washington State call upon all to stand with our Muslim neighbors. A threat to one group to practice their religion, which is guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, is a threat to people of all faiths. The fear and hatred generated by Act for America and other such groups fuels hate speech and acts perpetrated on Muslims - from the desecration of mosques to attacks on Muslim women wearing a hijab. Anti-Muslim hate crime incidents rose dramatically in 2015 and then increased a further 44 percent in 2016, according to the Council on American Islamic Relations.

We cannot be silent when Muslims are under increasing attack. Our communities and neighborhoods are stronger when we stand together against hatred, in support of mutual respect, and in service to the common good.

Faith Action Network
www.fanwa.org

Church Council of Greater Seattle
www.thechurchcouncil.org

Neighbors In Faith
www.neighborsinfaith.org

Additional Information:

www.islamfactcheck.org
www.islamophobicnetwork.com
www.lettertobagdaddi.com
www.acommonword.com
www.cairseattle.org
www.splcenter.org/20161025/journalists-manual-field-guide-anti-muslim-extremists