



December 9, 2015

Dear Educator and/or School Administrator:

The recent terrorist attacks in Paris, France and San Bernardino, California, followed by the vitriol and hate speech being spewed by individuals in power, those running for public office, and certain media outlets has lead to a spike in incidents against American Muslims and those that are assumed to be Muslim. Harassment and bullying of Muslim students is also being reported at many schools. The targeting of minority groups and the vilification of an entire religion, race or ethnic group is unfortunately, not new in our young history as a country. However, we have learned from some of those lessons and now victims of hate crimes have laws that afford them justice.

As an educator, we know that you strive to make sure that school is a safe space for every student. We urge you to take a pro-active role in the current climate of national hysteria against Muslims and declare your school a safe zone for all of your students. We encourage you to send a memo to all parents making clear that your school and school district has zero tolerance for racism or bigotry in any form. We know that racism and bigotry usually starts at home so it is crucial that this message be relayed to parents as well as students. We hope that you will outline repercussions for this type of behavior.

We also hope you will use these incidents as a teaching moment for students. No faith, ethnic or racial group has a monopoly on criminals or criminal acts. The Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks terrorist acts in the United States, lists terrorist acts by Muslims as representing

less than 3%, while terrorist acts by Christian militias and white supremacist groups represent the bulk of terrorism committed in our country. According to the crowd-sourced website shootingtracker.com, which keeps a running tally of gun violence, there have been more than 350 shootings this year in which four or more people were wounded or killed in each incident, very few have involved Muslims. No acts of terrorism or violence are justified, but it is important to put statistics in perspective.

We would like to make ourselves available to you, your school and district. As an organization, we run the Islamic Resource Center, which hosts the only Islamic public lending library in Wisconsin. The IRC has more than 2500 books, DVDs and other informational resources on Islam and the Muslim community. We are available to answer questions or to present educational lectures or workshops for teachers so they are better able to respond to their students' questions.

These are troubling times and we know your foremost mission is the safety and education of all of your students, we are here to help in any way we can.

Thank you for being part of an incredibly noble profession!

Sincerely,

Janan Najeeb

President

Advocacy  
Education  
Outreach