

2017 CIVIL RIGHTS REPORT

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OKLAHOMA

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LETTER FROM CIVIL RIGHTS DIRECTOR



Assalamu Alaikum and greetings of peace,

The report you are holding in your hands represents the third annual release of a CAIR Oklahoma (CAIR-OK) Civil Rights Report, a product of the passion and dedication of many individuals as well as myself. Over the past year, the Civil Rights Department has experienced a tremendous amount of growth and change, which would not be possible without your generous support. This report will show you the results of your investment, the new progress we've made in safeguarding civil liberties in our state, and the work yet to do to ensure that Oklahoma Muslims are a safe, secure, and welcomed part of the fabric of our state. For all you have given me, for the opportunity to serve you and your families, and for the trust you place in CAIR-OK to be the state's leading Muslim civil rights advocacy group, I cannot thank you enough.

2017 was a year full of challenges, on the national, state, and local level. With your support, we rose to meet each new challenge to the best of our ability, keeping you informed on what these changes mean for you and how best to advocate for yourself. We saw troubling trends in the numbers of families impacted by the Muslim Ban, harsh new immigration policy, and changes in the law that affect our security as a minority community. However, the year also brought with it a growth in the resources we are able to provide. Our Guides to Islamic Religious Practices, Know Your Rights materials, and community advisories keep you up to date in the world of rapidly changing civil rights law and help you ensure fair and considerate treatment when you need it. The Civil Rights Department is more visible than ever on the front line of the struggle to protect your rights and keep Oklahoma a safe and prosperous state for everyone.

The opportunity to learn from you has been life-changing for me, and I am so proud to call you my Oklahoma Muslim family. I thank you all for your dedication, your compassion, and your love as we continue to uphold the American values of liberty and justice, ensuring that they truly apply to all.

Although the struggle can seem difficult, I am confident that CAIR-OK is uniquely poised to be a leader and an innovator in Oklahoma's social justice movement. With your support, we will continue to work with our coalitions to strengthen the state we call home and uplift the Muslim community as a vital part in the fabric of Oklahoma.

All my best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Laizure', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

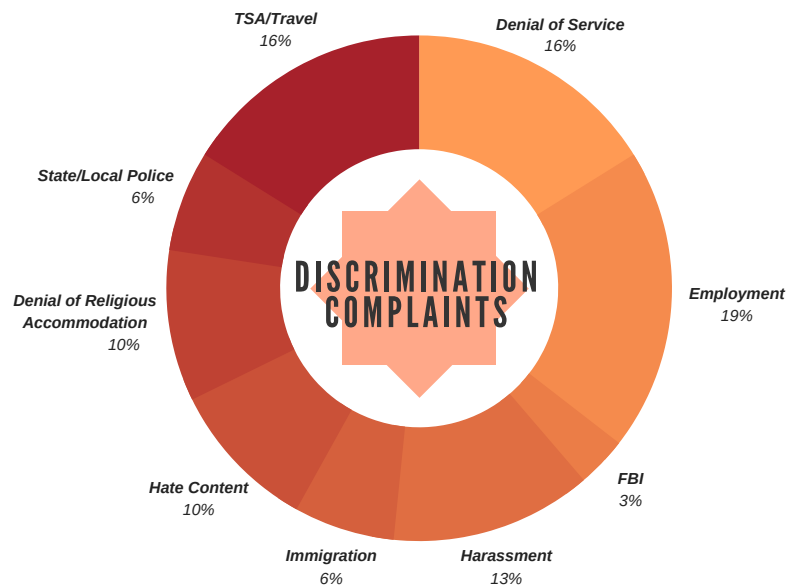
Veronica Laizure

INTRODUCTION

Each year, the CAIR-OK Civil Rights Department responds to hundreds of complaints. These complaints come in through our website reporting form, through emails, or via phone call or text, and they originate in locations across our state. First, we complete a thorough intake procedure by interviewing the complainant and collecting all relevant documentation. Then we review the complaint, looking for evidence of anti-Muslim bias, discrimination, harassment, or motive, and determining the triggering factor for the discriminatory act or acts. If the services of the CAIR-OK Civil Rights Department are required, we are equipped to represent clients for whom legal action becomes necessary.

The most common issues handled by the Civil Rights Department:

- Employment issues: failure to hire, wrongful termination, harassment on the job
- Islamophobic propaganda: sharing and propagating Islamophobia in print, on the air, or online
- Denial of religious accommodation: failure to provide reasonable accommodations for religious practices
- Law Enforcement: profiling, intrusion, inappropriate questioning or contact
- Harassment and Hate Crime: bullying, verbal and physical attacks, damage to property, violence
- Travel-related issues: No-Fly cases, DHS TRIP complaints, invasive screening procedures

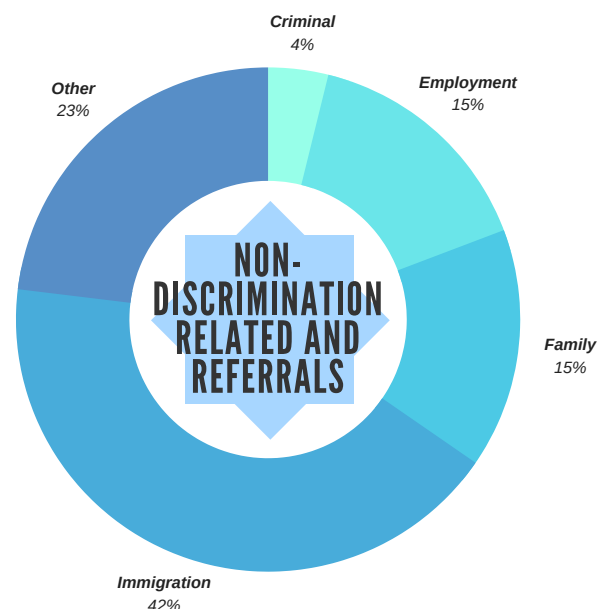


Where a case or issue does not fall within the scope of our services, we refer clients to a network of legal services and provide additional services where needed.

- Immigration Law: non-Executive Order-related immigration issues, visa applications, citizenship applications, etc.
- Family Law: divorces, child custody, protective orders
- Criminal Law: criminal defense
- Property Law: landlord-tenant disputes, probate, real estate property transfers, etc.
- Non-discriminatory Employment Law

We also provide connections to many other necessary services:

- Mental health counseling
- Women's resource centers
- State and federal support services
- Food and rental assistance through local nonprofits



METHODOLOGY:

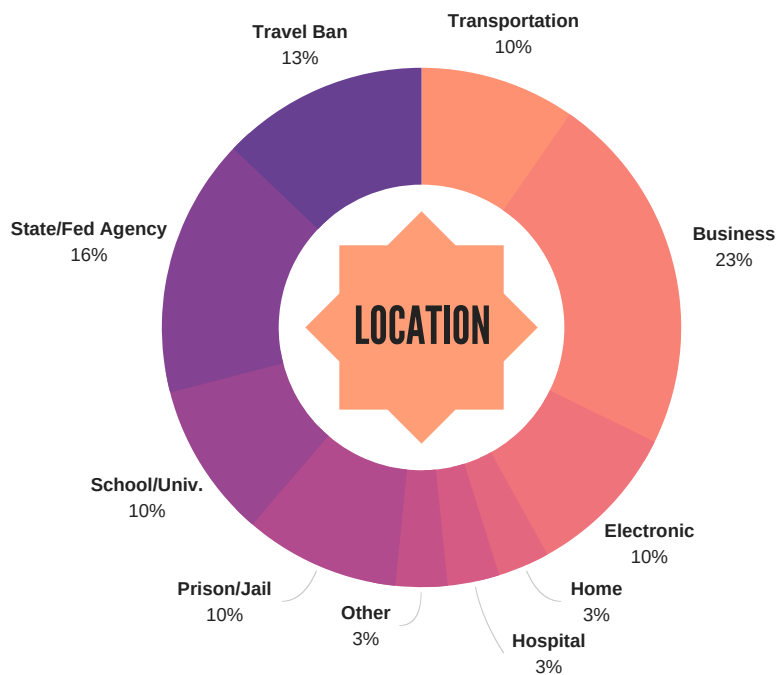
The information in this report is based on complaints received by the CAIR-OK Civil Rights Department between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2017. Complaints are received via telephone, email, or our online complaint reporting form and entered into a secure database, which supplements the case management system.

Each complaint is processed and categorized based on several factors that are determined during initial intake and follow-up calls:

- **TYPE OF ABUSE**

This category specifies the type of discrimination that the complainant is experiencing. Since many cases show evidence of multiple types of abuse, staff determine which of the categories applies the best based on the evidence presented during intake and interviews.

- o *Denial of Accommodation* – refusal to accommodate Muslim religious practices
- o *Denial of service or access* – Refusal to provide service or access to services
- o *Employment* – hiring, firing, and promotional decisions based on discriminatory factors
- o *FBI* – inappropriate contact from FBI agents
- o *Harassment* – threatening or disturbing content directed at an individual or group of individuals; can be via phone, email, social media, or in person
- o *Hate crimes* – includes damage to property, verbal or physical assault, or other crimes against persons committed based on victims' identity
- o *Islamophobic Propaganda* – the sharing or spreading of Islamophobic images, memes, or other information; usually on social media, but also includes posters or flyers placed in public locations
- o *Prisoner* – complaints from incarcerated persons
- o *State/local Police* – inappropriate or abusive conduct by a state or local police officer or agency, based on discriminatory factors
- o *Student/school* – bullying, harassment, or unfair treatment against a student in an educational institution
- o *Travel ban* – families affected by the Muslim ban executive orders
- o *TSA* – discrimination occurring at domestic airports, committed by TSA agents
- o *Watchlist* – presence on a No-Fly or selected list that results in difficulties with travel, employment, etc.



• LOCATION

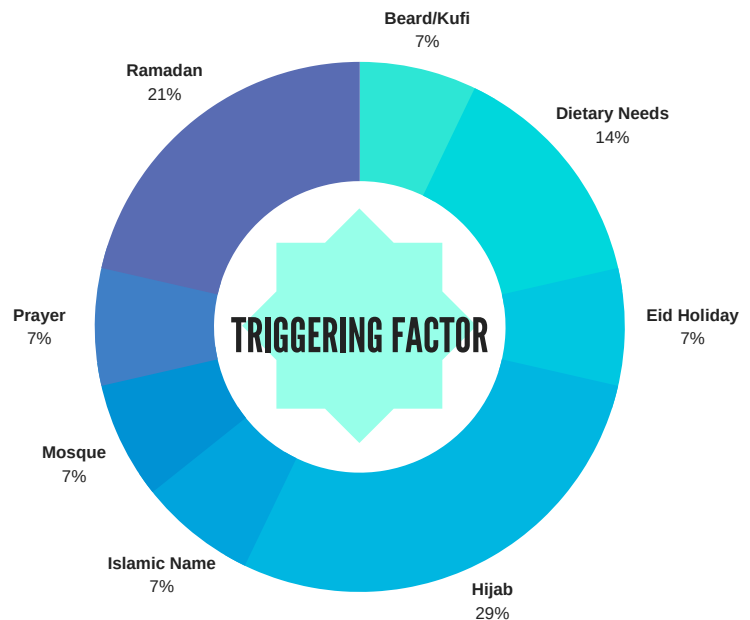
The location of the actions that form the basis of the complaint is an important part of assessing who is at fault and what actions need to be taken to help the complainant.

- o University or school
- o State/federal agency
- o Restaurant, store, or other place of business
- o Home
- o Work
- o Airport or other transportation hub
- o Online

• TRIGGERING FACTOR

The triggering factor that caused the discriminatory action can be difficult to determine, and not all complaints processed show clear evidence of a single articulable triggering factor. Thus, many complaints are processed and logged without a triggering factor.

- o Ramadan
- o Dietary needs
- o Hijab
- o Kufi
- o Islamic name
- o Beard
- o Prayer accommodations
- o Ethnicity/Nationality



The triggering factor that caused the discriminatory action can be difficult to determine, and not all complaints processed show clear evidence of a single articulable triggering factor.

KEY FINDINGS, TRENDS, AND STATISTICS

**30% more
discrimination
complaints**

Oklahoma Muslims reported 30% more discrimination related complaints in 2017, compared with complaints from 2016.

The institution of President Trump's series of executive orders restricting travel from several Muslim-majority countries meant that the CAIR-OK Civil Rights Department saw a large increase in travel-related complaints, now representing approximately 16% of complaints as opposed to having received no calls in the year prior. We have also seen a significant increase in complaints regarding denial of service, denial of religious accommodation, and employment. Harassment complaints have remained steady between 2016 and 2017.

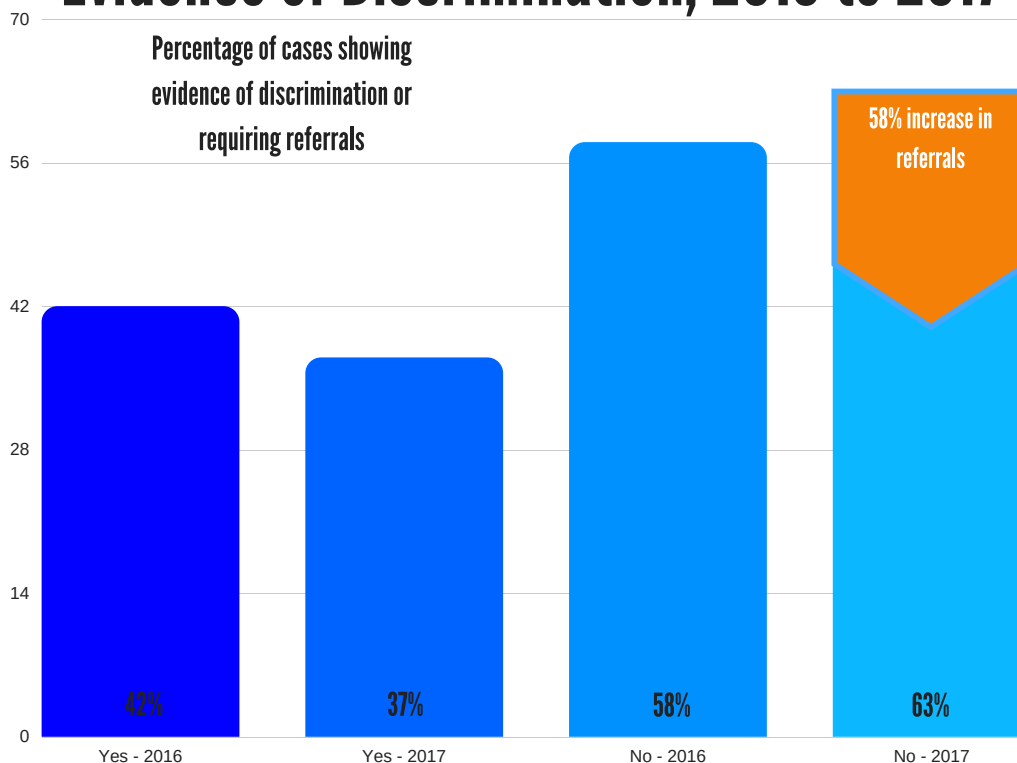
In the past year, we have seen substantial decreases in complaints related to the FBI and hate crimes. We have also observed a drop in student complaints which could be related to our 2016 publication of the Educator's Guide to Islam and our participation in the Title III Symposium.

The Civil Rights Department received almost double the amount of calls requiring referrals in 2017 as compared to 2016. Most notably, there have been concerning immigration services requests wherein it jumped to represent 42% of total calls, as opposed to the prior year's 15%.

In total, the Civil Rights Department saw a 46% increase in total calls processed.

**46% increase in
total calls
processed**

Evidence of Discrimination, 2016 to 2017





NO MUSLIM
BAN EVER

CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS

After the turmoil of the 2016 election cycle, the CAIR-OK Civil Rights Department had a number of positive developments as we responded to challenges on the local, state, and national levels.

We improved community engagement and relations by developing and releasing resources and conducting workshops and outreach efforts. We responded to critical national political developments by mobilizing local responses, educating our community on the impact of these policy changes, and demonstrating our continued commitment to the protection of civil rights across our state.

CAIR OKLAHOMA TAKES ACTION

Between the proposed DACA repeal and the multiple iterations of the Trump administration's Travel Ban, there has been heightened anxiety and tension concerning immigration and rights regarding those of certain immigration statuses. In response to such, CAIR-OK issued informational posts, guides, and provided resources for those with concerns and questions about policies and how to navigate legal and social action.

- **ISSUING INFORMATIONAL POSTS AND RESOURCES**

We utilize every tool at our disposal to make sure our community is apprised of their rights and of the impact of changes at the national level. Through targeted emails, blog posts, and social media activity, we equip people with the up-to-date information they need to make informed decisions.

- **OFFICIAL STATEMENTS ASSERTING CAIR'S POSITION**

Wherever possible, CAIR-OK establishes a position that places us on the side of protecting human rights and civil liberties. Whether we are standing for immigrants, our LGBTQ+ friends, or the many Oklahomans impacted by discriminatory state action, we always will affirm our commitment to justice in a diverse, pluralistic society.

- **REMINDER OF RIGHTS AND ACTION TO TAKE**

Know Your Rights bulletins are a key part of our community's ability to advocate for their rights in a variety of situations. At the border, in a car, at home, at an airport – CAIR-OK wants to make sure that people know their rights and how they are affected by policy changes at every level.



DACA REPEAL

In 2017, the Trump administration announced it was going to phase out the five-year-old Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), which had provided a means to defer deportation for DREAM Act recipients who met certain criteria. Through the next few months, the administration planned to adjudicate DACA applications on a case-by-case basis and reject any new requests filed after Oct 5, 2017.

CAIR-OK stood with local activists in support of Oklahoma's immigrant community, urging action by state and national leaders to protect the rights of those who came to America in search of a brighter future and who improve our state through their hard work and dedication. We also signed on to an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief that was filed in federal court against the states who sued to enjoin the DACA program.



[Report an Incident](#)






ACTION ALERT: Contact DHS Regarding New Rule on Social Media Tracking for All Immigrants, Including U.S. Citizens



Last month, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") proposed a new rule to track the internet activity for all visa applicants, visa holders, legal permanent residents, and naturalized U.S. Citizens. The new rule would track and store social media account information and other highly sensitive data as part of individuals' immigration files. The new policy will allow DHS to collect and track individual's social media accounts handles – including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook – along with aliases, associated identifiable information, and search results. DHS search result will include not just public search engines, such as Google or Bing, but also commercial databases.

CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS (CON.)

THE PATH TO THE MUSLIM BAN

JANUARY 2017

President Donald Trump issues Executive Order 13769, also known as EO-1, the travel ban, or “Muslim Ban,” with the stated purpose to be to defend the United States against terrorism. The order applies immigration restrictions on foreign nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries: Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, and Libya. Restrictions include halting issuance of certain visas and suspension of entry for 90 days to migrants and non-migrant foreign nationals from the specified countries. The order also completely bars entry of Syrian refugees to the United States for the duration of the order as well as limited the number of refugees accepted to 50,000 for 2017.

CAIR-OK joins many other local civil rights and interfaith organizations to condemn the Muslim ban and express concern over its implications for local communities in press statements sent to major news outlets in Oklahoma.

JUNE 2017

The administration petitions the injunction issued prior. A panel of judges rule to uphold the injunction having found (1) President Trump to have overreached broad authority over immigration, (2) the order to have violated laws that prohibit nationality-based discrimination, and (3) President Trump to have not followed appropriate process to institute limit on admission of refugees. The United States Supreme Court issues ruling stating the travel ban could not be enforced on foreign nationals or refugees who have a credible claim and a proven documented relationship with a person or entity in the United States.

FEBRUARY 2017

The Court issues a judgement in a related case barring application of Section 2(c) of the order which specified suspension of entry of foreign nationals.

MARCH 2017

President Trump issues Executive order 13780, also known as EO-2 or “Muslim Ban 2.0,” as a revisionary directive to the original order. The order questions if certain foreign governments cooperate in disclosing information about their citizens attempting to migrate to the United States, citing lack of cooperation as a security threat. Foreign nationals from six out of the original seven countries, Iraq being excluded in this revision, are barred from entry to the United States for 90 days.

The State of Hawaii files civil action to halt the order, alleging it violates the First Amendment Establishment Clause and the Immigration and Nationality Act among others. The Court ultimately rules to uphold the injunction against the order with minor exceptions.

CAIR-OK issues a Know Your Rights bulletin, informing the community on what the changes mean and how best to ensure safe travel to and from the U.S.

SEPTEMBER 2017

President Trump issues Presidential Proclamation No. 9645 on the day EO-2 was set to expire. The Proclamation imposes an indefinite travel ban on eight countries, five of which were previously listed in the original orders: Iran, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Chad, North Korea, and Venezuela. Hawaii files a lawsuit opposing ban.

CAIR-OK releases new Know Your Rights materials updating the community on what the new restrictions mean, emphasizing that despite the small changes, the ban remains targeted at Muslims at home and abroad.

DECEMBER 2017

The Court grants the administration's appeal, allowing for the Proclamation to be applied in full effect while the case is pending. The US Court of Appeals upholds injunction, maintaining that the Proclamation exceeds the scope of the President's authority and probably violates the Immigration and Nationality Act.

JANUARY 2018

The administration petitions the Supreme Court, saying the injunction was overly broad and it halted important national security measures. The State of Hawaii and the administration argue over whether the Proclamation violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

APRIL 2018

Both parties argue their cases. The administration argues that immigration falls under presidential authority and upholding the order is a matter of national security. Hawaii argues that given the history of the Proclamation and previous orders, the law is discriminatorily motivated, violates laws, and is overreaching of authority.

2018

FEBRUARY 2018

The Court sets the argument date for April 25, 2018.

JUNE 2018

In a dismaying ruling, the Supreme Court upholds the Muslim Ban as a constitutional exercise of Presidential authority. In their 5-4 decision, the Court applied a very deferential rational-basis test to the president's actions and rejected the Plaintiffs' arguments that Trump's statements during the campaign were strong enough indicia of an improper religiously-motivated animus. In her dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor laments that the court has blindly endorsed "a discriminatory policy motivated by animosity toward" Muslims and that the decision reflects some of the same problematic arguments underlying *Korematsu*, which upheld the internment of Japanese American citizens during World War II.

OCTOBER 2017

The judge issues a temporary restraining order preventing the Proclamation from being enforced against all countries but North Korea and Venezuela.

CAIR-OK issues updated Know Your Rights materials, along with a series of blog posts informing the community on how the case progressed and what it means for Muslims in the U.S. We also developed materials helping people know how to respond - by contacting their representatives and continuing to remain engaged in the civic process.

DENIAL OF SERVICE, ACCESS, OR ACCOMMODATION

These complaints involve the denial of service or access to services based on discriminatory factors, such as the wearing of religious head coverings or an assumed Islamic name. Frequently, these cases can be solved with the drafting of letters from an attorney or, alternatively, from an Imam who testifies as to the seriousness of the individual's religious practices.



- **PASSPORT PHOTO**

A client wished to wear a kufi, or religious head covering, for his passport photo. The CAIR-OK Civil Rights Director wrote a letter to the local passport office, describing the religious and cultural significance of the kufi to the officials and detailing the federal guidelines that permit the wearing of a religious cap in a government-issued identification photo. The client was permitted to wear his kufi in his passport photo.

- **EID HOLIDAYS**

Many students and their families wish to celebrate Eid holidays without a negative impact on the student's grades or disciplinary record. Letters from the Civil Rights Department explaining the importance of Eid holidays and the obligation of public schools to respect a student's religion often help ensure that these families are permitted to attend Eid celebrations without penalty.



SCHOOL AND STUDENT ISSUES

CAIR-OK believes that education is the most important part of a young person's life. Unfortunately, Muslim youth across the country reported heightened levels of bullying and harassment in 2017. Oklahoma saw fewer complaints of student-on-student bullying, which could be attributed in part to the production and distribution of the Educator's Guide to Islam and Muslims, which was released in 2016. Increased work with teachers, school staff, and administrators helps to protect Muslim students and to ensure a safe, healthy, and productive learning environment for all.

- **GUIDES FOR EDUCATORS**

In January 2017, CAIR-OK began distributing the Educator's Guide to Islamic Religious Practices, outlining some important religious principles and suggestions on how educators may appropriately support their Muslim students and families. The guide has been distributed free of charge to over 1000 students, families, and education professionals as a vital resource.

- **ADVOCACY IN ACTION**

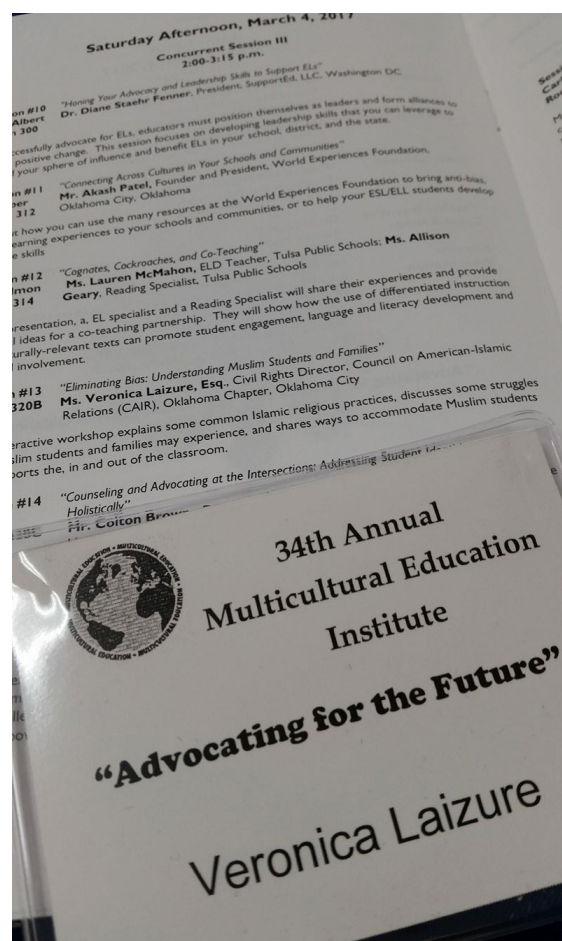
Edmond Public Schools invited the Civil Rights Department to a workshop in May 2017 titled "Advocacy in Action." The Civil Rights Director delivered a workshop to dozens of Edmond teachers and staff on supporting Muslim students and their families and distributed the Educator's Guide at the workshop.

- **MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION**

CAIR-OK was featured at the Annual Multicultural Education Institute held at the University of Central Oklahoma in March 2017. The presentation "Eliminating Bias: Understanding Muslim Students and Families" received fully positive reviews, and several hundred copies of the Educator's Guide were distributed during the summit's Saturday sessions.

- **BACK TO SCHOOL**

Each August, the Civil Rights Department prepares materials for students who are heading back to school for a new term. By encouraging parents and their students to open communications with the school regarding any accommodations that might be needed, families can work together with staff to ensure that each Muslim child can spend the year learning in a supportive and safe school environment. Free copies of the Educator's Guide can help start some of those challenging conversations.

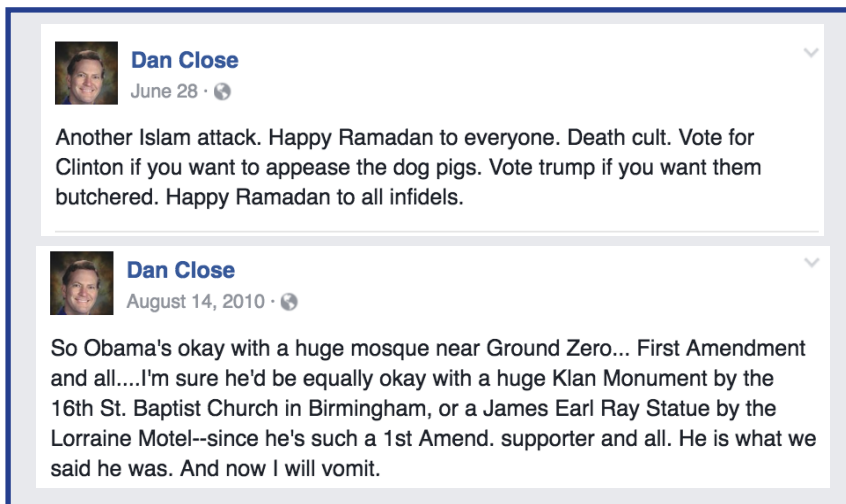


To obtain free copies of the Educator's Guide to Islamic Religious Practices, please visit cairoklahoma.com/resources or contact the Civil Rights Department directly.

ISLAMOPHOBIC PROPAGANDA AND HARASSMENT

ISLAMOPHOBIC PROPAGANDA

The increasing prevalence of social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram provide new outlets for people to express themselves. However, social media can also become a tool for spreading hateful Islamophobic images and memes as well as misinformation about Islam and the Muslim community. While much of the Islamophobic content is protected by the First Amendment, CAIR-OK takes action when the digital world intrudes too far into the real world.



- **DEWEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

A teacher from Dewey Public Schools was found to have posted several Islamophobic memes on his personal Facebook page, including posts calling Islam a “death cult” and calling for people to vote for Donald Trump “if you want them butchered.” When the posts went public, CAIR-OK immediately responded with public condemnation that a teacher would use his platform in such a manner. We also reached out to Dewey Public Schools to encourage them to make use of the Educator’s Guide to Islamic Religious Practices and to host an in-person training session with their teachers and staff.

- **SECURITY PROTOCOL**

Numerous anti-Muslim memes and images are sent to the CAIR-OK social media pages and even directly to the CAIR-OK office. In response to a series of disturbing emails, the CAIR-OK office installed new security measures to protect the office and its information, including the institution of a new appointment-only policy for visitors to the office.

- **TAGGING IN**

While much of the Islamophobic content is not legally actionable, we train our community’s allies on how to respond with facts to miseducation and misinformation about the Muslim community. Our work with the interfaith and social justice community helps us form a network of allies who can respond to hateful speech with words of love, support, and compassion.



State representative John Bennett posted a meme on his Facebook page suggesting that the removal of Confederate monuments should also lead to the removal of American mosques after 9/11.

HARASSMENT

Sadly, complaints of harassment against Muslims continue to persist in 2017. Muslim women, especially those who wear hijab, are increasingly the targets of shouts, threats, and other bullying behavior. Whether by phone, email, social media, or in person, these threatening and hateful messages deliver a clear message to Muslims that they are not wanted or appreciated. CAIR-OK helps to prepare community members on how to respond in the event that they face harassment or bullying and helps to ensure that law enforcement is prepared to step in and intervene when necessary.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE FACED WITH HARASSMENT:

- **Do not engage.** Perpetrators of harassment will often subside if they see they are not getting a response. Try to ignore the perpetrator and instead reach a safe place.
- **Record the incident.** If you have a cell phone or other device with video recording capability, use it if you are able to do so. Video footage of an event can be vital in helping determine who is at fault after the fact.
- **Enlist help.** Store management, security officers, or even passersby can step in to help get you away from a harasser. Ask a specific person to help you rather than just asking generally.
- **Call the police.** While the police often cannot help in the moment, a police report can help establish that you felt unsafe and concerned and can set up a record of the perpetrator's behavior for future legal action.
- **Report to CAIR-OK.** Every report to our office helps us track the spread of Islamophobia in our communities. You can call, email, or use the website reporting form; none of your information will be made public without your consent.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



Report An Incident

CAIR OKLAHOMA

The Impact of Yesterday's Supreme Court Muslim Ban Decision

Dear Community Members,

The Supreme Court issued a decision on the Muslim Ban ("Muslim Ban 3.0") yesterday.

First and foremost, we remind our community members and supporters that this is one of many fights for social justice playing out in the federal government this week - while we are focused on the Muslim Ban, we are supportive of those who are advocating for DACA protections and those who are challenging the proposed tax plan.



Throughout the year, CAIR-OK issues Know Your Rights materials in the form of print guides, workshops, and community advisories. In any situation, whether it's at the airport, at school, at work, or even at home, we want the community to be advised of their rights and prepared to advocate for themselves.

• RAMADAN

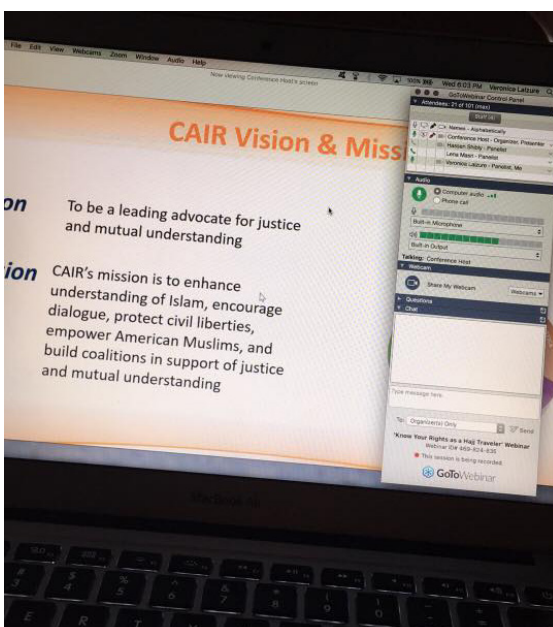
During the month of Ramadan, employees and students in particular may need accommodations for fasting and prayers. Before the month begins, we issue a Know Your Rights bulletin and provide letters for those who want to request accommodations for their fast.

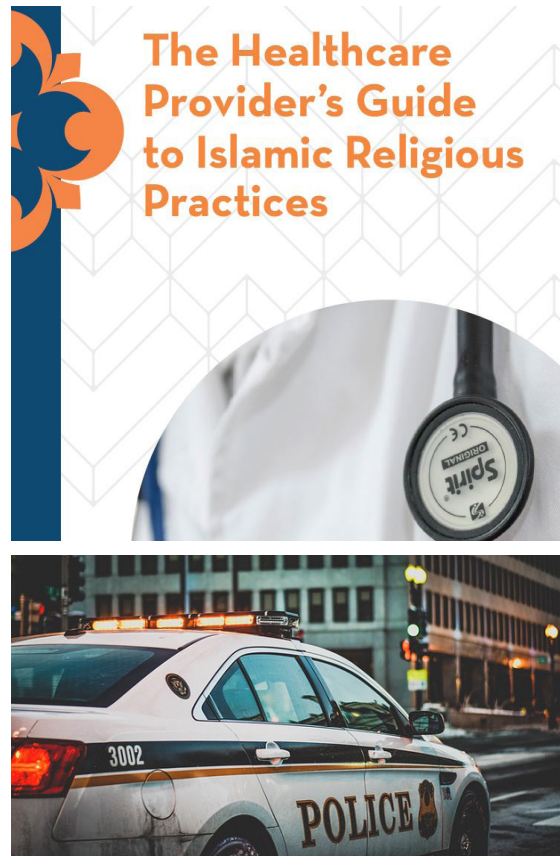
• HAJJ

Hajj can be one of the most important spiritual experiences of a Muslim's life. To make sure that travel is safe, secure, and easy, we release Know Your Rights materials that detail what you might expect at your domestic airports and at customs when you return. As the law has changed after the institutions of the travel ban, we stay up to date on the latest developments that affect your rights as you complete Hajj.

• IMMIGRATION

2017 was a tumultuous year for immigrants across the country, with developments at national level that were often confusing and conflicting in their implementation. With each new change, CAIR-OK's Civil Rights Department analyzed the shifting trends in immigration policy and issued new Know Your Rights bulletins to protect the rights of our vulnerable communities.





MEDIA, RESOURCES, AND PUBLICATIONS

CAIR-OK remains at the forefront of organizations that provide resources throughout the state to educate people on the realities of Islam and Muslims in Oklahoma. Our brochures, guides, and other educational materials are widely distributed for free to community members, educators, professionals, and many other groups. In 2017, CAIR-OK continued this tradition with the production of new resources to meet our community's needs.

- **KYR LAW ENFORCEMENT CARDS**

As a response to heightened levels of FBI contacts and law enforcement issues, CAIR-OK produced wallet-sized Know Your Rights information that people can carry in their pockets, wallets, and cars, so that they can be informed of their rights when confronted by a law enforcement professional.

- **EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS PRACTICES**

In early 2017, CAIR-OK released the second in its series of Guides to Islamic Practices aimed at educators and staff at public schools. The guides explain some basic Muslim religious tenets and suggest ways that schools can ensure their Muslim students are safe and protected.

- **HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS GUIDE TO ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS PRACTICES**

The third guide in our series was released in November 2017. This guide focused on the ways that healthcare providers can develop strategies and practices that appropriately meet the needs of their Muslim patients and families. Like the other guides, it contains basic information on Muslim religious practices as well as some practical information that can assist a provider in understanding the concerns of a Muslim family in a healthcare setting.

- **2016 CIVIL RIGHTS REPORT**

The 2016 Civil Rights Report detailing the complaints and incidents processed by the Civil Rights Department was released in March 2017. Covering data from 2016, the report showed alarming trends in the number of hate crimes and harassment reports compared with the previous year. This data not only helps the Civil Rights Department to develop targeted resources for the issues facing the community; it also helps our allies and friends across the state know where to direct their resources as we fight Islamophobia in Oklahoma.



Update: Superintendent releases statement about Dewey teacher who ...

Tulsa World - Jan 6, 2017

Veronica Laizure, civil rights director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Oklahoma, released a statement Friday calling for the school district to ...
under fire for Facebook posts calling for Muslims to ...



CAIR-OK IN THE MEDIA

As the state's foremost Muslim civil rights advocacy organization, CAIR-OK is frequently featured in media outlets across the state. From newspapers to television to radio and podcasting, the Civil Rights Department is called on to answer questions about Islam and Muslims in Oklahoma and about the many events that our department is involved in.



8, 2017

l rights director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations-
e must remember that these policies are an echo of a ...



Civil Rights Report Shows Increase In Oklahoma Hate Crimes

news9.com KWTW - Apr 5, 2017

... particular when it comes to hate crimes and assaults we've kind of seen an escalation of violence there," CAIR-OK Civil Rights Director **Veronica Laizure** said.



Thirteen activists to be honored at Human Rights Award ceremony

City-sentinel - Nov 21, 2017

The 2017 Human Rights Awards honorees are: Victor Acosta, Narcisco Arguelles, Fannie Bates, Dr. Mari Fagin, Rena Guay, David Hill, **Veronica Laizure**, ...



A Baker's Dozen for a better world: At state Capitol ceremony, thirteen ...

City-sentinel - Dec 9, 2017

Veronica Laizure from the Council for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-OK), was the next award winner. She praised Adam Soltani as "the best boss ever," ...



Trump's travel ban raises concerns in Oklahoma's immigrant ...

NewsOK.com - Jan 30, 2017

... needy Jewish refugees out of fear and suspicion," said **Veronica Laizure**, civil rights director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations-Oklahoma chapter.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

CAIR-OK works to serve and defend the community, and in 2017, we developed our initiatives to help in new ways. We recognize that people's lives are affected by multiple aspects of their identities, aside from religious affiliation. To help work toward a more cohesive community, we aimed to create spaces in which Oklahomans would feel comfortable sharing their experiences and supporting each other to promote understanding and respect.



- **ANTI-RACISM**

It is an unfortunate truth that within the Muslim community, racism continues to impact the way that community members interact and engage with each other. CAIR-OK developed Community Conversations aimed at discussing issues of antiblackness and colorism within the Muslim community, facilitating panels that featured religious scholars, academic professionals, and Black Muslims who shared their funny, poignant, and oftentimes painful experiences.

- CAIR-OK joined the YWCA of Oklahoma City's annual Stand Against Racism campaign, aimed at helping to raise awareness of the damaging impact of racism. The 2017 campaign focused on empowering women of color and honoring the many female leaders that are making impactful changes in Oklahoma.

- **EMPOWERING WOMEN**

CAIR-San Francisco Bay Area Executive Director Zahra Billoo joined CAIR-OK and the Surayya Anne OKC Foundation to discuss the challenges women face in leadership positions and the benefits of supporting and uplifting each other in our work.



MSA UCO's Muslim Student Association Presents:

central conversations:

Black History and Race Relations in Islam

An open panel discussion on the topics of race in Islam, prominent African-American Muslim historical figures, and Islam's role in empowering racial minorities.

Panel Moderator

Monday, February 19th
6 PM - 7:30 PM
High University Center, Room 201


Veronica Laizure, J.D.
Civil Rights Director at CAIR-Oklahoma


Imam Imad Enchassi, PhD.
Imam of the Islamic Society of Greater Oklahoma City


Lisa E. Wright
M.A. in African and African American Studies


Masood Abdul Haqq
Board Member of CAIR-OK and Masjid Mu'minun

Light refreshments will be served

UCO Students of all religious/faith backgrounds are welcome and encouraged to attend

- **CAIR-OK IN ARKANSAS**

In October 2017, the CAIR-OK Civil Rights Director was invited to speak at Hendrix College in Conway, AR, as well as the Al-Medina Institute of Little Rock. During the visit, the Civil Rights Director delivered lectures to undergraduate students on the issues faced by Muslims in America and the importance of interfaith service. The Al-Medina Institute hosted a lecture to discuss some of the services that CAIR-OK provides: civil rights protection, government affairs trainings and advocacy, legal representation, and youth empowerment programs.



Know Your Rights!

with Veronica Laizure, Esq
CAIR Oklahoma Civil Rights Director

Saturday
October 28th

Workshop begins at 5PM



- **DEMOGRAPHICS**

CAIR-OK, in conjunction with the Islamic Council of Oklahoma, directed and completed the state's first Oklahoma Muslim Demographic Survey, collecting data from over 500 participants on their household makeup, demographic information, and experiences with community engagement. This vital data can be used to more accurately depict the real experiences of the Oklahoma Muslim community.



INTERFAITH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

A key component of civil rights work in Oklahoma is connecting with other social justice organizations and the people who consistently stand with the Oklahoma Muslim community. Over the years, the CAIR-OK Civil Rights Department has been recognized as a vital part of Oklahoma's social justice movement, and the friendships we cultivate help us amplify our messages, building bridges of tolerance and mutual understanding.

- **VOLUNTEER TRAINING**

With the increase in volunteer engagement following the 2016 elections, CAIR-OK developed training sessions to help educate non-Muslim volunteers on how to work with the Muslim community. Our volunteer training sessions took place in both Oklahoma City and Tulsa, and they also featured a webinar component that helped educate our allies on how to respectfully engage with Muslims and work with CAIR-OK.

- **BYSTANDER INTERVENTION TRAINING**

We developed the first ever Bystander Intervention Training, which took place in October 2017 at the Mercy Mission Building. Over 100 community allies learned how to step in when they witness harassment in public and practiced using the skills taught by facilitator Zahra Billoo, CAIR-San Francisco Bay Area Executive Director. The training was so successful that we had dozens of requests to repeat it in 2018.



Speakers were great, but the role-playing was invaluable and very instructive. These are skills that we need to practice to use effectively if need arises. I would love to attend more training. - Review of Bystander Intervention Training



- **HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS GUIDE**

With the publication of the Healthcare Providers Guide to Islamic Religious Practices, we had a number of medical professionals reach out asking for trainings for medical and nursing students. The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center as well as the University of Central Oklahoma and Langston University Nursing programs hosted workshops that featured the CAIR-OK Civil Rights Director, training a new generation of healthcare professionals to competently address the needs of their Muslim patients and families.

- **MUSLIMS AND MENTAL HEALTH**

The CAIR-OK Civil Rights Director delivered a workshop at the 2017 Zarrow Mental Health Symposium, a summit in Tulsa attended by hundreds of mental health professionals and other service providers. During the workshop, we discussed the particular needs of Muslim patients in healthcare settings and some of the cultural and religious factors that affect mental health in the Muslim community.

- **OKLAHOMA NONPROFIT PROFESSIONALS**

As a member of the Oklahoma nonprofit community, CAIR-OK gladly shares resources with other nonprofit professionals. Through the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits, CAIR-OK delivered workshops on supporting Muslim employees in the professional world, highlighting some of the local events that show how important a diverse, pluralistic work force can be to our state's economy.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

CAIR-OK has always been dedicated to youth empowerment and leadership, and 2017 proved to be a year of exceptional development. A series of events aimed at helping young Muslims develop pride in their identity, grooming them for future leadership positions, was the highlight of our youth programs in 2017.

- **MYLS**

We hosted our annual Muslim Youth Leadership Symposium wherein young Muslims attended workshops discussing a variety of matters such as racism and the forms in which it manifests, grassroots organizations, and how to navigate professional life as a young Muslim in Oklahoma. Featured speakers, including respected professors and nonprofit executives, shared their experiences and answered questions about developing a strong professional identity.

- **YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IFTAR**

As part of establishing a young professionals' network, CAIR-OK held a community iftar open to all to join in discussion of the uniquely complicated experiences being a minority in Oklahoma presents one with. We were happy to host panelists from the Sikh Community, Native American Community, and Hindu Community of Oklahoma, allowing us to speak to an issue larger than just our own and promote support and solidarity among various minority groups in the state.

- **ICO YOUTH FORUM**

CAIR-OK's Civil Rights Director Veronica Laizure was invited to speak at Islamic Council of Oklahoma Youth's Talking Taboo iftar to discuss intersectionality and the complexity of identity. The event encouraged Muslim youth to engage with experiences they had growing up Muslim in the United States.



As a legal intern with CAIR-OK, I had many experiences I wouldn't have had anywhere else. Not only was I able to interact with clients, but I was also given opportunities to improve my public speaking. I assisted Veronica in coordinating a Bystander Intervention Training where I was trusted to host the event. Although I was nervous, the team at CAIR-OK gave me the tools I needed to feel more confident speaking in front of a large group. We had over a hundred people in attendance and each of them were eager to learn how they could properly intervene when witnessing harassment. I can honestly say that my legal internship with CAIR-OK has prepared me to represent our diverse community in and out of the courtroom.
(Summer 2017 Legal Intern Aubrey DeClercq)

LEGAL INTERNS

Legal Interns are a key component of the Civil Rights Department. In 2017, CAIR-OK enjoyed legal interns in both the spring and the summer, hosting some of the best young law students in the state. Spring interns Tristan Davis and Olivia Glazner and summer interns Aiza Skelton and Aubrey DeClercq completed intake interviews for new clients, conducted legal research on relevant issues, and assisted in community events as they learned the skills that will help them become legal professionals in future.





HONORING SERVICE

In December 2017, CAIR-OK Civil Rights Director Veronica Laizure was honored along with 12 other state leaders with the 2017 Human Rights Award. Each year, the Oklahoma Universal Human Rights Alliance selects a number of honorees who have made significant contributions to human rights in the state of Oklahoma. The award ceremony was hosted in conjunction with International Human Rights Day on December 10, the date in 1948 on which the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In her remarks during the ceremony, Veronica paraphrased a verse from the Quran, saying,
“When one group’s civil liberties are threatened, it is as though all of our civil liberties are at risk... And where one group’s civil liberties are upheld, the rights of all humanity are protected.”



