Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 9, 2011

Dear Chairman King:

We are writing regarding the Homeland Security Committee's upcoming hearings, which you have stated will focus exclusively on radicalization among Muslim Americans and homegrown terrorism. We agree that Congress and all levels of government have a duty to protect America from terrorism, whether from abroad or homegrown. We are, however, deeply concerned that the stated narrow scope and underlying premises of these hearings unfairly stigmatizes and alienates Muslim Americans. We ask that you reconsider the scope of these hearings and instead examine all forms of violence motivated by extremist beliefs, rather than unfairly focusing on just one religious group.

We believe that the tone and focus of these hearings runs contrary to our nation's values. Muslim Americans contribute to our nation's wellbeing in many professions including as doctors, engineers, lawyers, firefighters, business entrepreneurs, teachers, police officers and Members of Congress. Their hard work helps to make our country exceptional.

Furthermore, casting a negative light on an entire community--- rather than focusing on actual dangerous fringes will only strain community relationships and trust that local, state and federal law enforcement agencies have worked hard to develop. Muslim Americans are an integral part of our larger American society and should be treated as such, not viewed with suspicion.

The choice between our values of inclusiveness and pluralism and our security is a false one.

If you wish to examine violent extremism, we ask that you do so by examining violence motivated by extremist beliefs in all its forms. Singling out one religious group and blaming the actions of individuals on an entire community is not only unfair, it is unwise-- and it will not make our country any safer.

Sincerely,

Pete Stark

John D. Dingell

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