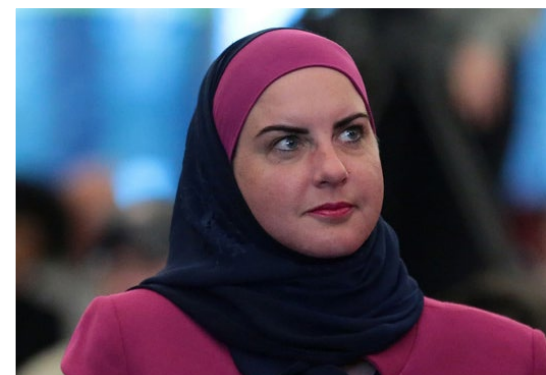
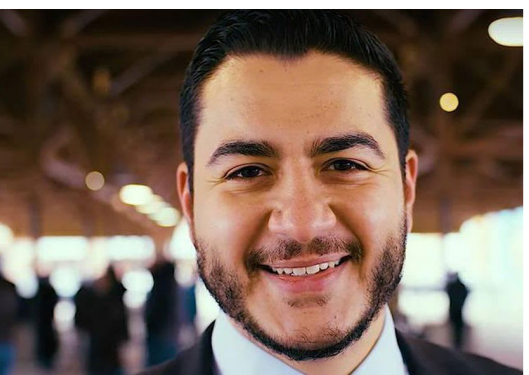




THE RISE OF AMERICAN MUSLIM CHANGEMAKERS:

Political Organizing in the Trump Era

Updated 2019



RESEARCH & ADVOCACY



AUTHORS

This report is possible as a result of a collaborative effort among Jetpac, CAIR, and MPower Change.



CAIR is the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, with over 34 offices across the country. Its mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, protect civil rights, promote justice, and empower American Muslims. The Department of Research and Advocacy provides up to date research on anti-Muslim bigotry, the impact of Islamophobia on American politics and culture, and American Muslim civil society in various sectors.



Jetpac (Justice Education Technology Political Advocacy Center) is a training and educational organization that seeks to build a strong American Muslim political infrastructure and increase the community's influence and engagement. It trains professionals on grassroots mobilization, civic advocacy, and community organizing, and educates American Muslim youth on civics and leadership.



MPower Change is one of the largest Muslim led social and racial justice organizations in the United States. Rooted in the Islamic faith and the Prophetic model, it believes in building a more just world for all people. Using digital organizing and faith-rooted community organizing, it is building a grassroots movement made up of diverse Muslim and ally communities throughout the United States.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
5	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS
10	METHODS
11	AMERICAN MUSLIM CHANGEMAKERS: A GRASSROOTS STORY
17	AMERICAN MUSLIMS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL
27	AMERICAN MUSLIMS IN LOCAL & STATE POLITICS
38	AMERICAN MUSLIM GRASSROOTS POLITICAL ORGANIZING
44	APPENDIX I MUSLIMS THAT RAN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE BETWEEN 2016-2019

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides qualitative and quantitative analysis of the rise of the American Muslim political class in the Trump era. It does so by profiling American Muslim candidates that ran for public office between 2016 and 2019 and offering insight from Muslim civic engagement organizations on effective methods of grassroots organizing.

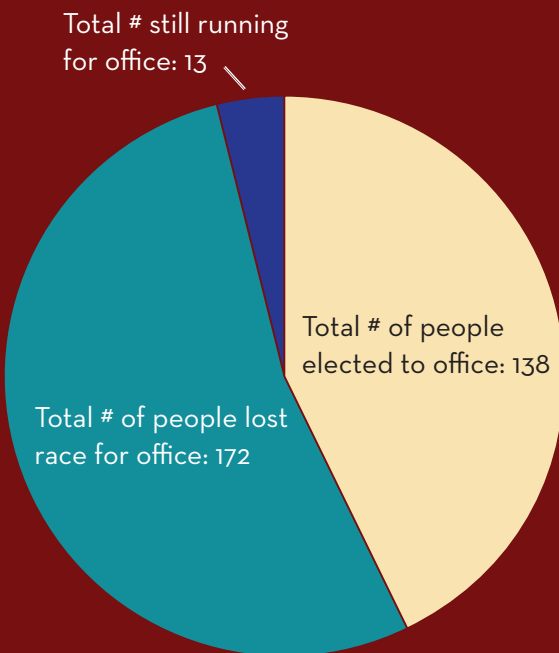
It also provides results from CAIR and Jetpac polls and databases documenting American Muslim political engagement and attitudes in the current political moment. This report allows community organizers and political strategists to reflect and discuss the various tactics and approaches used by American Muslim candidates at the local, state, and national levels as they begin to prepare for the 2020 presidential and congressional elections.

A RISING POLITICAL CLASS

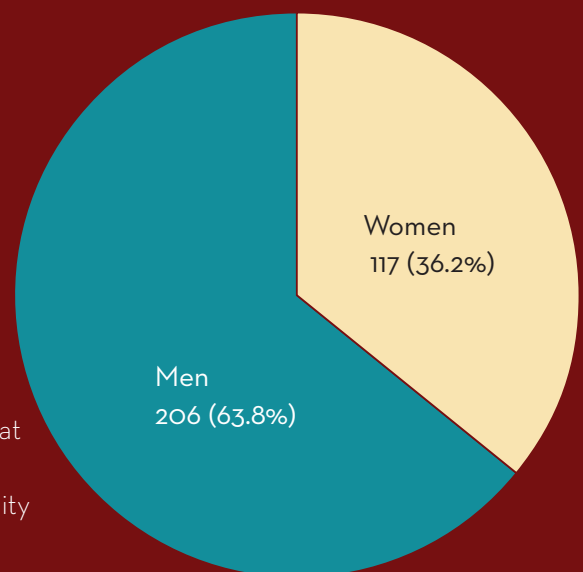
AMERICAN MUSLIMS WHO RAN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE BETWEEN 2016-2019



323 candidates ran or are running for elected office between 2016 and 2019 at various levels of government despite the overwhelming anti-Muslim narrative in the public sphere.



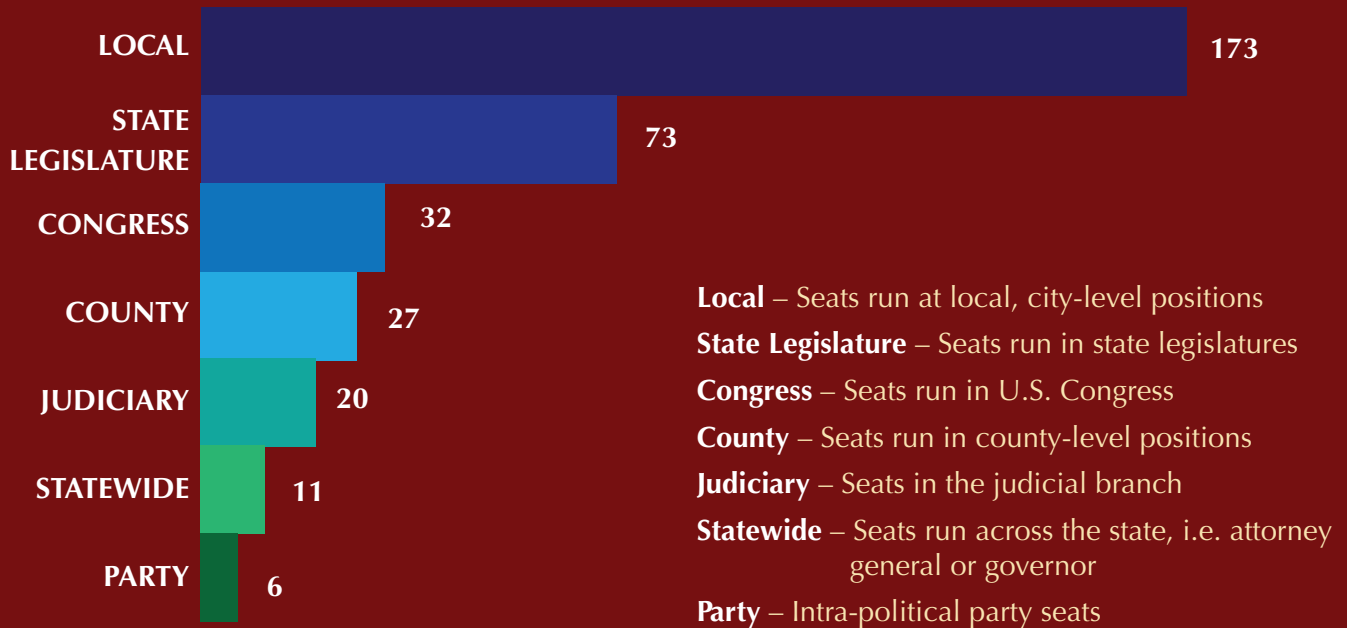
117 of these candidates, or a full **36** percent, were female, proving once more that gender-based stereotypes that diminish the role of American Muslim women in community life are more myth than reality.



LEVELS OF OFFICE SOUGHT



323 Muslim candidates ran **342** campaigns between **2016** and **2019**. Some candidates ran for office during more than one election year, sometimes for a different position each time.



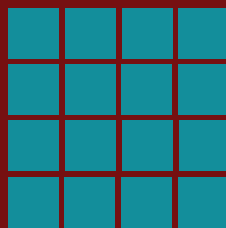
FUNDS RAISED ON NATIONAL, STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS



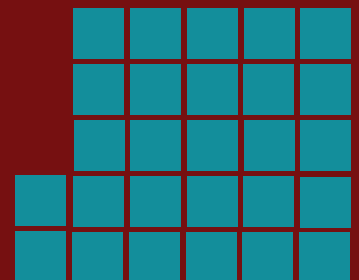
\$22 million was raised by American Muslim candidates between 2016–2019 for their various campaigns.



**\$5.08 MILLION RAISED
ON THE STATE LEVEL**

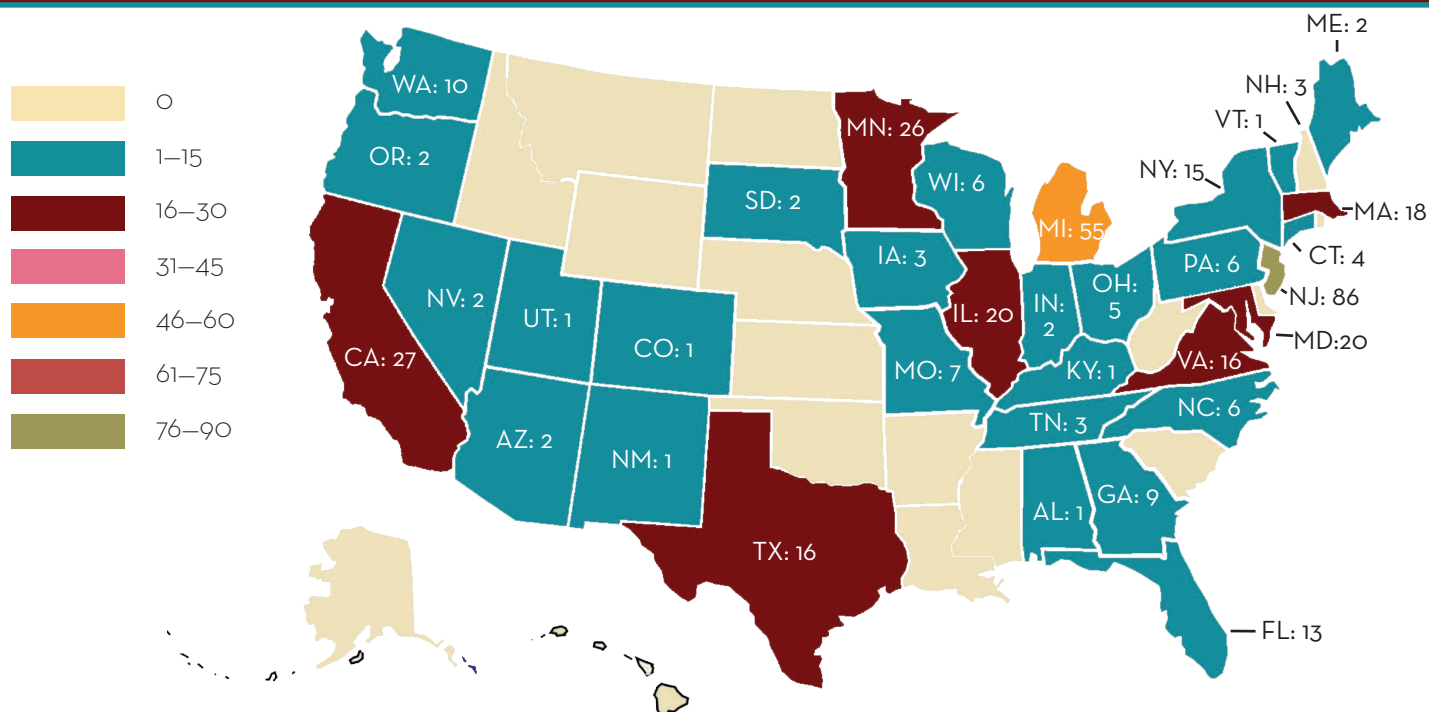


**\$16.9 MILLION RAISED
BY CONGRESSIONAL
CANDIDATES**



**\$22 MILLION RAISED
IN TOTAL**

AMERICAN MUSLIM CANDIDATES BY STATE



2018 CAIR VOTER EXIT POLL RESULTS



1,027

registered Muslim voters participated in a nation-wide exit poll on the night of the 2018 Midterm elections. In this study, CAIR researchers surveyed voters' political values and attitudes.

55% of Muslim voters have become more civically engaged since the 2016 presidential election.



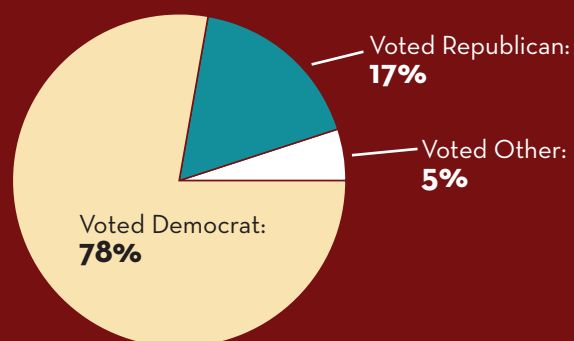
46% of Muslim voters consider themselves liberal on social issues.



43% of Muslim voters consider themselves fiscally conservative.



26% of Muslims who voted for Democrats identify as conservative on social issues while **36%** identify as being fiscally conservative.



68% of Muslim voters thought Islamophobia increased in the past year.



78% of Muslim voters who voted for Democrats thought Islamophobia increased in the past year compared to 33% of those that voted for Republicans.



KEY FINDINGS

More Mobilization, Less Persuasion

- Campaigns that focused on providing political access for traditionally marginalized populations resulted in a significant rise in voter turnout.
- This newly activated political base translated into direct political support in the form of votes and financial or in-kind contributions.

Uphill Battle

- Most political candidates were grassroots oriented, non-institutional, and often faced opposition from established political actors.
- This lack of institutional support required intense and early ground level organizing.
- Engaging and activating new political bases required more financial and human resources than expected.
- Candidates consistently reported that mosque-based communities and traditional Muslim institutions did not play an early or significant role in mobilizing campaign resources.

Message Discipline, Narrative Control

- Candidates that made organic use of social media, digital storytelling, and video production were able to mobilize voters at community and national levels in greater degrees than those who did not.
- Candidates reported that a strong multi-platform social media presence with consistent message discipline helped control media narratives about candidates and mitigate potentially negative coverage.

Muslim, American, Human

- Although most American Muslim candidates reported that Trump-era Islamophobia motivated them to enter formal politics, they stated that their faith motivated their agenda, but did not define or limit it.
- Most candidates reported that their faith values guided their social justice orientation by prioritizing human welfare and social equity.

METHODS

The data presented in this report was gathered through a collaboration between CAIR, Jetpac and MPower Change, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. In addition to distilling insights from conversations and interviews with candidates and stakeholders in the American Muslim political organizing space, this report presents information on Muslim voter attitudes in 2018 and provides a current list of American Muslims elected to office between 2016 and 2019.

Data on American Muslim voter attitudes came from CAIR's 2018 midterm election exit poll survey. The survey sampled 1,027 respondents to ask questions on basic demographic indicators, perception of personal political ideology, social values, and religiosity, political and civic engagement and voting behavior, and the perception of Islamophobia. Data on American Muslim candidates and campaigns are products of an ongoing joint effort between Jetpac and CAIR that documents American Muslim political organizing capacity. This information is gathered through an automated survey of media sources, as well as through outreach to CAIR and Jetpac professional networks and donor bases. Surveying anti-Muslim and Islamophobic blogs and websites that attack American Muslim candidates proved to be a supplemental, albeit ironic, source of information. For fundraising data, CAIR and Jetpac used Ballotpedia and the Federal Election Commission and state finance data sources to acquire information on fundraising efforts and the district's history.

AMERICAN MUSLIM CHANGEMAKERS:

A GRASSROOTS STORY



UNAPOLOGETIC—

if there was one word that could sum up the spirit and posture of the new American Muslim political class, that would be it. In the face of relentless attacks on their faith, heritage, and political orientation, the rising political actors from various Muslim backgrounds are proactive and bold about their identity. They are empowered citizens ready to serve their constituents on issues that affect all Americans and do not shy away about their faith in a political atmosphere that attacks them for simply being Muslim.

This new political class is aggressively non-institutional and represents a broader trend in American politics of an engaged political insurgency. Like many Americans, they have grown suspicious of the status quo in partisan politics and of corporate interests' influence on policy-making. Prioritizing people before profit, their campaigns have been staunchly rooted in grassroots organizing, strategizing, and fundraising. As the profiles in this report show, these candidates' policy priorities are grounded in local interests. Issues such as fair wages, affordable and accessible healthcare, and equitable housing top their strategic priorities.

Drawing support from a range of community-based networks and organizations, the candidates profiled in this report demonstrate that building deliberate and meaningful coalitions can challenge even the most entrenched political forces. In this way, American Muslim political actors are largely aligned with progressive leftist voices in the current political spectrum. Like their non-Muslim counterparts in this space, they envision an American political future that serves the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in the country.

While Islamophobia has been a distinct feature of American culture for decades, it has also become an alarmingly mainstream component of contemporary politics. In fact, research shows that anti-Muslim rhetoric, hate crimes, and bias incidents tend to spike around election cycles. The rise of anti-Muslim bigotry as a political phenomenon can be traced to 2010 when a manufactured controversy surrounding the construction of a mosque near the former World Trade Center took center stage in the national conversation. The Park51 Mosque, led by progressive Imam and interfaith icon Feisal Abdul Rauf, was attacked by anti-Muslim activists. Propagandists such as Pamela Geller, who would normally be considered fringe actors in the media and political space, were catapulted to national attention as the GOP adopted their misinformation agenda as a way to galvanize its base during a critical election cycle.

Islamophobia has since become a firm anchor in the Republican Party's strategic narrative and has crystalized during the Trump era. Given this reality, one would think that addressing anti-Muslim activity in the political system would be the top priority for the new class of American Muslim political change makers. However, as this report demonstrates, the political priorities of American Muslim candidates and elected officials is less about Muslim identity and more about ensuring that American political culture serves everyone, equally and equitably. Rather than retreating from an uninviting political arena or acquiescing to the rampant cynicism that defines much of the average citizen's attitude to formal politics, these political actors have jumped directly into the combative public arena, exemplifying that principled and purposeful civic engagement is the only way to repair what so many see as a flawed and failing system.

It should be remembered, however, that American Muslims operating as a powerful political class is not a new phenomenon. In addition to immigrants and first-generation Americans engaging the political space, the African-American Muslim community—which some estimate constitutes 20 percent of the overall Muslim population in the country—exemplifies grassroots civic engagement and political empowerment.¹ With roots stretching to the antebellum South, where many enslaved Africans came from Muslim societies, contemporary African-American Muslim communities have flourished as pioneering social service providers and social justice advocates. Leaders such as Cleveland City Councilman Basheer Jones and Massachusetts attorney Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, both profiled in this report, have carried the legacy of Black American Muslim contributions to the formal political arena. They have laid the groundwork and set the precedent for their coreligionists to be grassroots-oriented, service-committed, and unapologetically Muslim.

As various forces within the American Muslim experience converge in the formal political arena, onlookers can expect to witness a few salient themes. First, most American Muslim candidates affiliate with the Democratic Party, whether of the liberal or progressive wings, while approximately 20 percent of American Muslim voters identify as independent.² Given the aforementioned attitude toward Muslims by the Republican Party, and the pre-2004 historical alignment of large bodies of the Muslim electorate with the GOP, a move to independent status among American Muslim voters is not surprising.

The second key characteristic of the American Muslim political class is its coalitional and intersectional grounding. That is, rather than running on platforms that seek to redress concerns that exclusively affect their community, Muslim candidates can be expected to align their interests with those of other ethnic and religious minorities who seek greater access to centers of decision-making power. As former Cambridge City Councilor Nadeem Mazen put it, “This stuff is not Muslim stuff... It’s American stuff.” In this context, it is not uncommon to see American Muslims supporting a range of social and political causes, such as full support of LGBTQ rights and the decriminalization of marijuana, that would typically be assumed to be at odds with their religious commitments.

A third dimension of the American Muslim political class that onlookers need to take into consideration is its local and decentralized, yet highly networked organizing capacity. American Muslims represent one of the most economically and ethnically diverse religious communities in the country, whose members overlap in multiple ways with various constituents.³ For example, African-American Muslims play a critical role in local politics throughout the country’s urban centers and are also connected to the growing web of ethnically Arab and South Asian stakeholders who are spread across the socio-political spectrum. The communication and organizing capacity of this radically decentralized but highly networked set of actors has the potential to draw human, political, and financial assets from an array of sources. Although systematic research on the American Muslim political class is still in its infancy, recent studies show that these trends indeed are well established and paint a reliable picture of the near future.

¹ “Demographic Portrait of Muslim Americans.” Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project. July 26, 2017. <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans/>.

² “American Muslims’ Political and Social Views.” Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project. July 26, 2017. <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/political-and-social-views/>.

³ “Demographic Portrait of Muslim Americans.” Pew Research Center

CAIR and Jetpac research demonstrates that Trump-era Islamophobia has propelled a rise in American Muslim political organization. According to their findings, a total of 323 candidates ran or are running for elected office between 2016 and 2019 at various levels of government despite the overwhelming anti-Muslim narrative in the public sphere. Of this total, 117 candidates, or a full 36 percent, were female, proving once more that gender-based stereotypes that diminish the role of American Muslim women in community life are more myth than reality. The overwhelming majority (see graph on page 7) of these campaigns were run at the local, county, or state legislative levels, showing that American Muslim candidates are firmly embedded in their communities and attuned to their political needs. Naturally, areas that have the largest Muslim populations also produced the largest number of candidates with California, New Jersey, Minnesota, and Michigan producing more than half (164) of the country's American Muslim candidates. The overall financial contribution of American Muslims in the political space demands further research. However, our preliminary findings suggest that between 2016 and 2019 American Muslim Congressional candidates raised \$16.9 million, and state level candidates raised \$5.08 million. For a full list of candidates that ran for office, please see Appendix I.

The rising American Muslim political class is supported by a broad and deep voter base with nuanced political views and religious attitudes. According to CAIR's recent report, "Candidates and Constituents," which provided the results of a phone-based exit survey conducted on the night of the 2018 midterm elections, 78 percent of American Muslim voters chose Democratic candidates. However, 35 percent of respondents also noted that they consider themselves socially conservative, while 43 percent considered themselves fiscally conservative. This breadth of political perspective and voting behavior demonstrates that American Muslims are not a single-issue voting class, but rather that they operate with versatility in a constantly shifting political environment.

As the candidate's profiled in this report indicate, broad based voter mobilization played a key role in activating their campaigns. Consistent with this qualitative insight, the data gathered by the CAIR exit poll shows that 55 percent of respondents became more active in politics and civic engagement since the 2016 election. This finding further demonstrates that American Muslims have responded to the country's Islamophobic political climate through active political engagement and substantive social service. A significant finding of the poll, however, also indicates that the American Muslim community's political engagement is not dependent or significantly related to mosque attendance or involvement: 41 percent of respondents indicated that they were "very" or "somewhat involved" in their local mosque or Islamic center, and 54.7 percent reported that they were "not very involved" or "not at all involved." American Muslim engagement, therefore, can be presumed to span across religious, class, and cultural lines.

The following pages introduce readers to a small pool of American Muslim candidates who ran campaigns at local, state, and national levels of office. Through these profiles, readers will gain a sense of the political mobilization strategies, messaging tactics, and financial planning the candidates pursued as they entered electoral politics. The report also provides readers with insight into the ways CAIR, Jetpac, and MPower Change operate at the grassroots and digital levels to mobilize for political change. Taken together, the contents of this report allow readers to understand and reflect upon the rise of the American Muslim political class in the Islamophobic age of the Trump administration. Most importantly, it provides a working blueprint for those interested in impacting the results of the 2020 presidential elections.

BASHEER JONES

OHIO

We asked Councilman Basheer Jones to reflect on how the following words related to his campaign and values.

FAITH IN POLITICS

Necessary. My faith is what guides me in politics. Being Muslim, our spiritual standard is what I always go back to. And to be quite honest with you, I'm always nervous in this position. I don't want to let people down— my community, the Muslims. I'm going to do my best and strive to be my best. Islam is what guides me to do the work that I do, I don't need to wear it on my sleeve, but I make it clear. This just part of my tradition, the legacy of African-American Muslims in this country: Imam Warith Deen Muhammad to Malcolm and the Muslims that came before.

HIS BIGGEST CHALLENGE

The biggest challenge I encountered was the opposition I met from the people you're trying to help the most. That's really the most unexpected thing. I mean, "I'm trying to be of assistance to you, so why are you positioning yourself as an enemy!?" People are complacent and content, even in darkness. So people will resist even when you try to bring light to a situation. So, I just pray that Allah blesses us all to increase in our growth and willingness to grow.

HIS BIGGEST REWARD

Alhamdulillah [praise God]. When we hit that Takbeer [God is Great] [at the City Council], the messages we got from around the country, from around the world!

AMERICAN MUSLIMS

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

From Bosnia, Nigeria, Iraq, Chicago, Ghana, Somalia! All across the globe, Muslims and people of faith were just proud that we called on God and made it clear that God is the Greatest. And of course to feed the people! For people to see us do what we said we are going to do and fulfill our promises. To increase their hope that there actually are people who say what they mean and mean what they say.

NEXT STEPS

Alhamdulillah. Either I run for higher office or move to Africa! [laughter] I'm trying to figure out what I'm supposed to do. I would love one day to take this message to a national stage, even international. But that also kind of scares me because I don't know if I'm ready for that. More light brings more exposure and I just pray that I'm prepared. I'm enjoying the present and walking wherever Allah takes me. I know He won't take me anywhere where I would get destroyed.

AMERICAN MUSLIMS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The addition of Rashida Tlaib from Michigan and Ilhan Omar from Minnesota to the U.S. Congress represents a new era in American Muslim federal electoral politics and representation. Not only are these trailblazers the first Muslim women elected to Congress, but their campaigns have also been thoroughly rooted in their communities and have advanced a progressive platform.

This section examines how national level American Muslim candidates have built their progressive, broad-based, grassroots campaigns. It is clear that the candidates' bases of support have been rooted in the different communities they identify with and serve through direct action. Profiled individuals include those who have run for their position for the first time, namely Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, and Deedra Abboud.

Candidates who engage wider civil society organizations and who have built up years of lower-level political organizing possess a serious competitive edge against other candidates. They are able to leverage their networks to build a quicker and larger base of popular and financial support across their state and the nation. This is especially the case when the candidates drive their message through deep engagement on social media platforms, which allows them to tap into pools of support outside of their immediate political environment.

In outlining the campaign strategies of the candidates at a national level, the relationship of the individual, the political, and religious identity is also interrogated. Many candidates have found themselves on the national stage challenging the low expectations that political commentators, outsiders, and even fellow Muslim community members placed upon them as rising Muslim candidates.



Photo courtesy of Omar Al Saray, CAIR

A photograph of Rashida Tlaib, a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a grey cardigan, smiling with her arms crossed. In the background is the Michigan State Capitol building with its large dome.

RASHIDA TLAIB

Michigan

“I will fight back against every racist and oppressive structure that needs to be dismantled,” announced Rashida Tlaib to the 3 a.m. crowd of supporters that stuck around until the last votes were counted in the Michigan 13th District Democratic Primary and the Detroit native’s victory was made final. “You deserve better.”⁴

On November 6, the 42-year-old daughter of Palestinian immigrants, oldest of 14 children, mother of two, and first in her family to go to college, went on to win the uncontested general election and become one of the first Muslim women elected to U.S. Congress. The district is one of the poorest in the country – less than half of residents are homeowners.

Tlaib started her political career in 2004 by interning and then working for Michigan State Representative and Majority Floor Leader Steve Tobocman. In 2008, she ran for and won Tobocman’s seat after he stepped down due to term limits. Having served her community and constituents for six years as a Representative in the Michigan Legislature from 2008 to 2014, Tlaib decided to run for Congress after witnessing the increasing attacks against American Muslims and immigrants following Donald Trump’s election.

“I ran because of injustices and because of my boys, who are questioning their [Muslim] identity and whether they belong. I’ve never been one to stand on the sidelines,” Tlaib said.⁵

Prior to her primary victory, Politico called Tlaib “the left’s way forward.”⁶ She is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America and while campaigning for Congress was endorsed by the Greater Detroit Democratic Socialists of America, People for Bernie, and Justice Democrats.

As a Congressional representative, Tlaib plans to advance a progressive policy agenda that includes Medicare for all, a national \$15 minimum wage, investment in local public schools, access to public colleges, environmental protections, and the restoration of the Voting Rights Act. Additionally, at a local level she intends to continue her direct impact work and operate a local Neighborhood Service Center to address the basic needs of her constituents.

In addressing supporters on how she negotiated her own identity and personal brand, Tlaib said, “I want people across the country to know that you don’t need to sell out...You don’t have to change who you are to run for office—and that is what this country is about.”⁷

“Even though people still may not understand my faith, I expose it in such an impactful way through public service,” Tlaib told The Detroit News, “People still cannot pronounce my name, but they remember the things that I do for them.”⁸

⁴ Herndon, Astead W. “Rashida Tlaib, With Primary Win, Is Poised to Become First Muslim Woman in Congress.” The New York Times. August 08, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/08/us/politics/rashida-tlaib-congress-muslim.html>.

⁵ Venkataramanan, Meena. “Muslim-American Women Hope to Make History in Midterm Elections.” ABC News. August 05, 2018. <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/muslim-american-women-hope-make-history-midterm-elections/story?id=56988133>.

⁶ Robertson, Derek. “Rashida Tlaib Is the Left’s Way Forward.” POLITICO. August 10, 2018. <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/08/10/rashida-tlaib-michigan-progressive-democrats-219346>.

⁷ Herndon, “Rashida Tlaib.” The New York Times.

⁸ Wright, Louisa. “Michigan’s Rashida Tlaib Set to Become First Muslim Woman in Congress.” MSN News. August 8, 2018. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/michigans-rashida-tlaib-set-to-become-first-muslim-woman-in-congress/ar-BBLF7qU>.



Image Credit: Ilhan Omar for State Representative

ENTERING

the U.S. as a refugee at the age of 12 in 1995, Ilhan Omar knew two English phrases: “hello” and “shut up.” Fast forward to 2016 and Omar became the first Somali-American Muslim legislator in the state of Minnesota. Two short years later, she can now claim the same for the United States Congress.

In 2016, Omar unseated a 44-year incumbent to win the Democratic primary in Minnesota’s Fifth Congressional District, which includes Minneapolis and its inner-ring suburbs. It has been her home for the past 20 years and is where she and her husband are raising their three children.



Courtesy of Boston Herald

As a black Muslim woman, Tahirah Amatul-Wadud made waves when she announced that she would challenge 29-year incumbent Richard Neal for Representative of Massachusetts' First District in the 2018 Democratic primary.

Rather than let her identity dominate the narrative, however, Amatul-Wadud used the media coverage it generated as an opportunity to talk about what she really cares about: the issues affecting the community she calls home. She frequently gave media interviews while touring

the facilities of local nonprofits as a way of amplifying their work and refused corporate donations.

Amatul-Wadud campaigned to demonstrate that she was a true representative of the people—both accountable and accessible to them. She traveled across her district, attending hundreds of events including rallies, party caucuses, and a women's march, and directly engaged with constituents on social media. Her platform reflected her desire to uplift her community and included Medicare for all, reliable internet access, and a livable minimum wage.

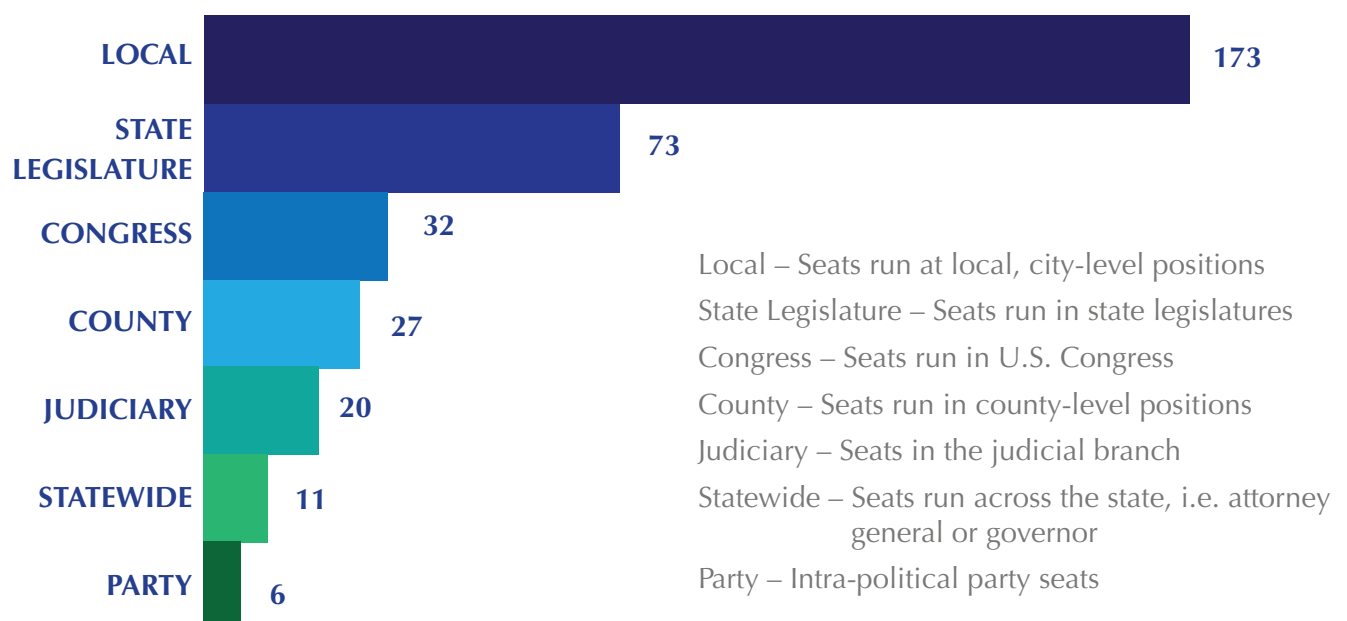
While thousands rallied behind Amatul-Wadud, her campaign was attacked by anti-Muslim activists. A series of hateful Islamophobic propaganda mailers accused her of being a secret agent and attempting to “implement Sharia law” in America. She was also attacked for voting for a Republican candidate for Senate in 2012, which she called “the biggest drama” of the campaign. Her response? “Own it. Be real.”

Despite losing, she remained positive about the impact of her campaign, writing, “We cannot deny that being a part of democracy is a healing for indifference and hopelessness... We made history and continue to attract national attention which shines the light on us and our needs.”¹³

Sitting in her law office two months after the election, Tahirah Amatul-Wadud had a message for Muslims thinking about running for office: “They absolutely must be engaged in the community from a broad sense and on larger issues, not just issues of Islam.” She continued, “People are going to see you however they decide, but regardless of how people see you, you have to have more depth to your experience than that.”

¹³ Amatul-Wadud, Tahirah. “Tahirah for Congress,” Campaign Website, <https://tahirahforcongress.com/>.

LEVELS OF OFFICE SOUGHT



“The journey that I have decided to take on today is not just for the people who look like me or sound like me, but for all Arizona.”

Deedra Abboud declared as she announced her candidacy for U.S. Senate.



The Little Rock native said she decided to run for U.S. Senate after witnessing the rhetoric of the 2016 presidential campaign. “When I saw families, friends, and neighbors being torn apart by the verbal attacks... I needed to be part of the movement to unite our communities and move us forward with the American values that have always made us the most inspiring country in the world.”

Prior to her Senate bid, Abboud worked for 15 years as a civil rights and social justice activist in Arizona. In 2003, Abboud helped start the Arizona chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the nation’s largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization.

Abboud campaigned statewide and made it a point to meet with rural voters who are regularly ignored by traditional state campaigns. She gained support from the broader community before the Arizona Muslim community eventually supported her campaign.

Her messaging strategy rested on one-on-one interactions and social media broadcasting for her campaign events using the hashtag #DeedralsEverywhere. Her policy platform included raising the minimum wage to \$15, providing healthcare for all, legalizing marijuana at the federal level, reforming student loans, and providing tuition-free community college.

Abboud’s campaign intentionally did not accept corporate or PAC donations or endorsements, instead asking supporters to individually donate or volunteer. She raised a little over \$100,000 and received 104,000 votes in the state primary, averaging 20 percent of the vote in each county.

Though she did not reach the general election, Abboud says that campaigning was the “best experience I have ever had.” Going into rural Arizona was a phenomenal interfaith experience for her. Abboud advises future American Muslim candidates to “have thick skin” and “figure out everything [your opponents] will throw at you and use it to your advantage.”



AMERICAN MUSLIMS

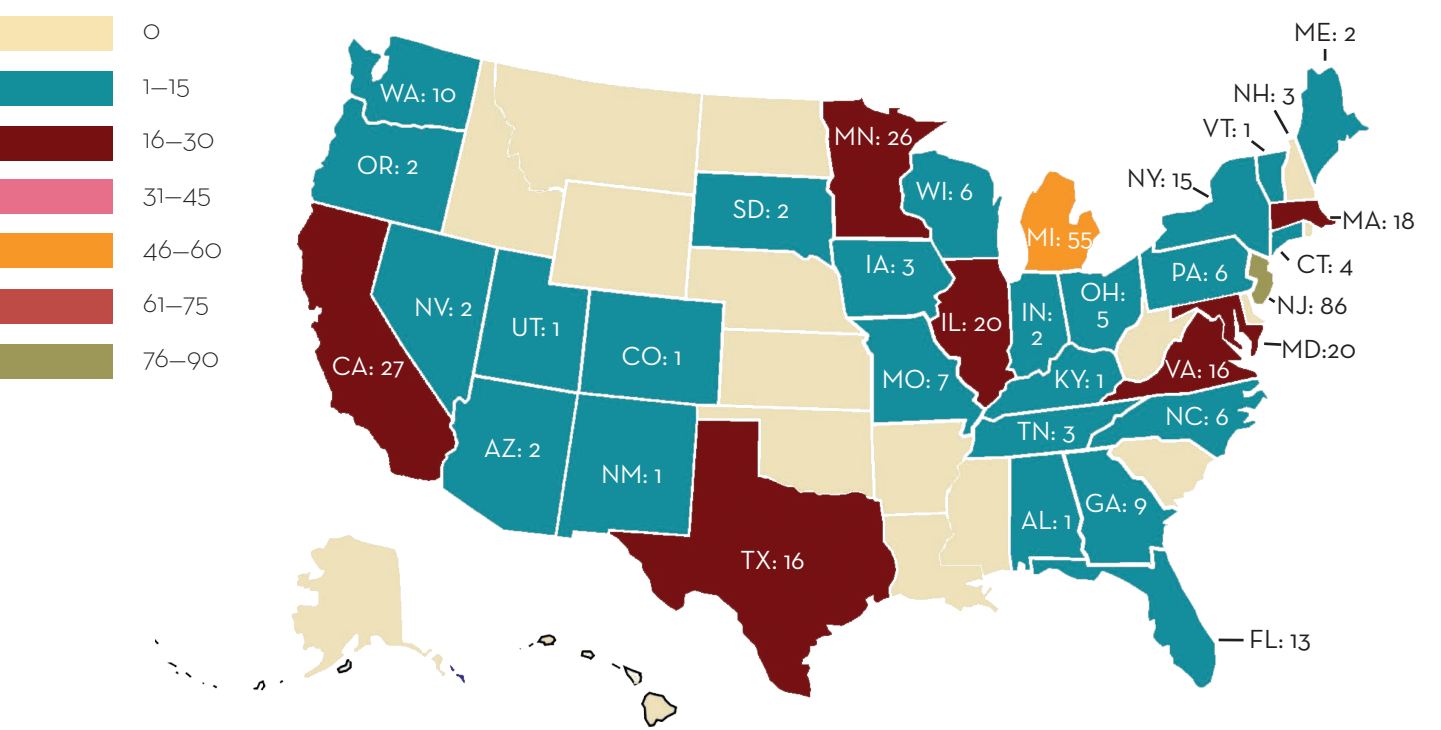
IN LOCAL AND STATE POLITICS

Every election, community organizers repeat the adage that candidates running for office want three things: votes, volunteers, and money. Candidates running for office, however, will not acquire any of these unless they can quickly define to potential supporters another set of three: who they are, what they want to accomplish, and what they oppose.

This section looks at local and state-level candidates and highlights their campaign strategies for success. It explores the backgrounds that define these candidates and how this informs their policy objectives. Each profile briefly shares the candidate’s personal journey from concerned citizens, to community activist and advocate, to candidate. Individuals profiled include Movita Johnson-Harrell, Sadaf Jaffer, Ibraheem Samirah, Basheer Jones, Ahmad Zahra, Aisha Yaqoob, and Abdul El-Sayed.

In outlining the campaign strategies of the candidates at the local and state level, the relationship of the individual, the political, and religious identity is also interrogated. Like their federal counterparts, many candidates have found themselves challenging the expectations of political commentators, outsiders, and even fellow Muslim community members.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF AMERICAN MUSLIM CANDIDATES



Q&A

We asked Abdul El-Sayed what came to mind when he heard the following words and how they related to his campaign and values.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

Critical. For me, it reminds me why I want to serve humanity. It is also a reminder that the beauty of the belief in God is that the result is in His control. This provides a tremendous amount of peace in what can otherwise be a very turbulent experience. Also, the fundamentals of our faith are really about character. Being a great politician is hopefully about having great character. Now, unfortunately, that's not often the case, but I always go back to that. My goal is to reflect my belief and faith in my character.

HIS BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Constant rejection. That's from people you know and people you don't. People often treat politicians like a commodity rather than as a person. People can be really, really mean and you have to be able to take it with a grain of salt and not respond to it. That's the hard part of running for office, you're putting yourself up for judgement. You're going to get rejected all the time and you have to be ok with that.

HIS BIGGEST REWARD

Watching young people who, for whatever reason—because of their faith, skin color, where they grew up, their family's wealth—have been told implicitly that they can't do a certain thing, then witnessing some-

one else, like them, do it—and do it well. Seeing their faces light up and watch them start to see themselves in new ways, I think, is the most rewarding thing about this. It's like the 11-year old who wants nothing to do with you in the beginning when his parents are hosting you, by the end of the night coming up to you with his piggy bank and giving it to his parents to donate to your campaign.

NEXT STEPS

For me, the work hasn't changed. I didn't go away because I lost my primary. It's about the work, not the election. It's not about the position. I intend to be fighting for my values and leading for a more just, more equitable, more sustainable America, inshaAllah, for the rest of my career. Hopefully for the rest of my life. I do intend to run again. I don't know for what office or when, but I'll keep leading in that direction. Life is short, long, and extremely unpredictable, so I would not presume the arrogance to know exactly what is going to happen in the future.

“I never thought I would get into politics. I come from generations of poverty and substance abuse and alcoholism. I grew up on welfare and lived in public housing,” said Movita Johnson-Harrell.¹⁴



Courtesy of Phillip Jackson / Billy Penn

Johnson-Harrell, former interim supervisor of Victim Services for Philadelphia’s District Attorney’s Office, won a highly contested special election for the 190th District seat in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. She is the first Muslim woman to be elected as a state representative in Pennsylvania. Her motivation was her children. “I wanted to break the cycle of poverty and the cycle of substance abuse,” she said. “I wanted them to have a better life.”¹⁵

In 2012, Johnson-Harrell’s teenage son was murdered in a case of mistaken identity. Three months later, she created the CHARLES Foundation, an acronym for Creating Healthy Alternatives Results in Less Emotional Suffering, to fight for kids on both sides of the gun. She started to work with organizations to get guns off the street and created a summer program for at-risk youth to come and receive conflict resolution, problem solving skills, and mentoring.¹⁶

Johnson-Harrell’s fight against gun violence led her to run for office. She first ran to represent Pennsylvania’s 190th

district in the state house in 2016, but lost to Vanessa Lowery-Brown. In 2018, when Lowery-Brown was convicted and sentenced for bribery, her office was vacated. Johnson-Harrell was a surprise third Democratic nominee for the seat. “We need someone to represent this district. We need somebody that’s going to do it with integrity, and you’re it,” they said, according to Johnson-Harrell.

Her platform encompasses key issues, including socioeconomic opportunity, education reform, and gun violence prevention. “I’m going to fight to end gun violence. I’m going to fight to improve the education in my district. I’m going to fight to create jobs and make sure that the tax breaks that are given are benefiting the poor,” she said.¹⁷

She is thrilled to have shattered a glass ceiling and opened the door for other marginalized communities. “Historically, we’ve been on the menu, and to be the first to provide that opportunity, with the intention of including more, is amazing.”¹⁸

¹⁴ Feller, Madison. “Movita Johnson-Harrell Is Now the First Muslim Woman in the Pennsylvania State Legislature.” ELLE. April 04, 2019. <https://www.elle.com/culture/career-politics/a27023412/movita-johnson-harrell-pennsylvania-house-interview/>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

A Palestinian-American

dentist from Herndon, VA, 27-year-old Ibraheem Samirah became the second Muslim elected to the Virginia General Assembly, representing the 86th District in the House of Delegates.

“Growing up, I enjoyed a typical American childhood,” he said. “That all changed in middle school when my father traveled to Jordan to care for his ailing mother and was denied re-entry to the U.S.” Samirah’s family was uprooted and relocated as they fought for his father’s reinstatement, which they eventually won after 11 years.¹⁹

“The road to here has been hard, but also it awakened in me a strong sense of justice and of the power of the government to both help and hurt people,” he said. Samirah ran for election because he wanted to be part of a system that helps people. “I want to help fix the system so it can help people,” he said. “What we have now is broken.”²⁰

Relying solely on grassroots and volunteers, Samirah ran a successful campaign. His policy priorities include expanding affordable healthcare and bringing down costs, expanding public transportation and lowering toll costs, education, jobs and the economy, drug policy reform, and protecting the environment.²¹

¹⁹ Hobson, Mercia. “86th District Candidates Share Their History, Viewpoints.” Viewpoints. February 7, 2019. <http://www.herndon-connection.com/news/2019/feb/07/86th-district-candidates-share-their-history-viewp/>.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Hobson, Mercia. “Ibraheem Samirah of Herndon Wins Democratic Nomination for 86th District.” The Connection. January 19, 2019. <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2019/jan/19/ibraheem-samirah-herndon-wins-democratic-nominatio/>.

SADAF JAFFER

New Jersey

Thirty-five-year-old Sadaf Jaffer made history as the first South Asian American Muslim woman to serve as a mayor in New Jersey. A scholar of South Asian, Islamic and gender studies at the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, she was sworn in as Montgomery Township Mayor in 2019.²²

Although she long had a desire to run for public office, the tipping point came in 2014, when she was part of the inaugural class of *Emerge New Jersey*, the local chapter of a national organization that trains Democratic women to run for office.²³

Shortly after the 2016 presidential election, the momentum accelerated. A group of South Asian American women in New Jersey began to meet informally to encourage each other to run for office and serve on local boards. The group has since grown into *Inspiring South Asian American Women* and holds regular events for community members looking to become involved.

“I decided to run for public office because I didn’t see my values reflected in my elected officials,” she said. “I’ve been a scholar and activist for some time. If you keep advocating to people who just don’t share your values, you eventually hit a wall.”²⁴

Jaffer first ran for a spot on the Montgomery Township Committee in 2016 as a write-in candidate, but lost the race. One year later she ran, this time on the ballot, and won the election. During the Committee’s annual

reorganization meeting in January, members selected Jaffer as mayor.

Her stated goals are to increase government transparency, establish more robust communication efforts with her community, and increase diversity and inclusion in her town’s various boards.

“I’m proud to be an example of what is possible for Muslim women in our political system,” said Jaffer. “I hope my example helps provide a different vision of what it means to be a Muslim woman in America today and the diversity of perspectives and skills we bring to the table.”²⁵



²² Kuruville, Carol. “New Jersey’s First South Asian Woman Mayor Is Breaking Boundaries.” HuffPost. January 31, 2019. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sadaf-jaffer-new-jersey-montgomery-township-mayor_n_5c472d0fe4b027c3bbc5a213.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Singh, Simran Jeet. “Meet Sadaf Jaffer, America’s First Female Muslim Mayor.” Religion News Service. February 14, 2019. <https://religionnews.com/2019/02/14/meet-sadaf-jaffer-americas-first-female-muslim-mayor/>.

²⁵ Ibid.

“I wanna say something that probably has never been said in here before,”

Basheer Jones told his audience. It was his swearing in ceremony in the Cleveland City Council chambers to become the first Muslim councilman in the city’s history.

BASHEER JONES

“TAKBEEER! TAKBEEER! TAKBEEER!”

Jones began a career in community organizing and grassroots activism relating to issues of social justice after his graduation from Georgia’s Morehouse College. He created the “Be the Change” leadership series, which holds leadership and character development workshops within various school systems throughout the state of Ohio.

After participating in and bringing national attention to a 72-hour camp-out in one of Cleveland’s most dangerous neighborhoods to protest the city’s gun violence epidemic, problems with food access, equitable housing and environmental racism, Jones launched and won his political campaign to represent Ward 7 on the Cleveland City Council. Jones’ campout campaign is representative of his larger political strategy, even as he eschews the idea that politics is separate from day-to-day life. When asked about how he planned to launch his campaign, he said simply that “I’m with the people. They see me on the basketball court, in their schools, helping, serving; so if you are against me, you’re out of step with the community.”

While one can argue that all politics is local and needs grassroots organizing, Jones’ movement should be characterized as hyper-local and entirely grounded in the neighborhood he lives in. He and his campaign knew that they would not enjoy the support of the Democratic Party

and traditional political groups. They instead secured their campaign in intense ground-level fundraising and political organizing. Jones ruffled feathers with the DNC when he sought, and received, support from Congresswoman Marcia Fudge to defeat the incumbent Democratic city councilman-- an endorsement he claims was made possible by his organic connection to city residents. Jones’s media strategy followed a similar course. By having a powerful presence on social media, his campaign argues that he was able to control his own narrative and thereby set the agenda for the way the media covered him.

Unfortunately, when asked about support from the local Muslim community he says, “The Muslims are asleep. They’re on the menu and will stay there until they get a seat at the table.” He reports that he received far less financial support in 2017 than he did in his first campaign from Muslim donors. He notes, however, that his inner-circle of advisors and volunteers are drawn from his faith-based networks.

Although he is the only Muslim on the City Council, Jones does not shy away from talking about his faith. “The Creator is always in control. And despite what our plans are, He is the best of planners,” Jones said. “And the fact is that he chose us for a great mission.” He says, “We’re just giving dawa [spreading the message] through service.”



AHMAD ZAHRA

California

"Politics isn't my favorite thing in the world," Ahmad Zahra said, but for him, winning the District 5 seat in Fullerton City Council was necessary to bring about the change he seeks in his hometown.

After earning his M.D. from both Syria and England at the young age of 23, Zahra left it behind to come to America and pursue his true passion: film. Now, the successful small business owner seeks to bring financial stability to his city, revitalize the local economy, and invest in neighborhoods, resident services, and infrastructure. Though he happens to be Muslim, Zahra prefers to focus on his plans for Fullerton, rather than center his religious identity.

"I was told by many that I can't win an election in Fullerton because of my name," Zahra said. That motivated him, in part, to develop a campaign strategy that branded his name and pushed it across social media platforms. Zahra relied heavily on social media to share his message, his story, and the solutions he sought to provide.

A former delegate in the local Democratic party, Zahra planted his roots within the local political space well before announcing his election campaign in late 2017. He strategically announced his candidacy before the convention in order to build up both sufficient funding and a political base. By the time the election rolled around, Zahra's campaign had raised over \$60,000 and more than 90 percent of those donations were under \$100.



From the start, Zahra frequented local nonprofit community events, knocked on doors every single day for months, and mailed thousands of fliers within his district. He did not, however, reach out to or gain the support of the Muslim community, in part due to limited time and resources.

The central question that came up through his campaign was, "How can an openly gay, Muslim, Arab, Syrian immigrant win in a Latino district?" said Zahra. And he realized that the key was through honest communication and connection with constituents. His strategy was to convey that "I've experienced the same thing as you," he said, and to put forward "solutions to the struggles that we all face."

When asked what advice he would give to American Muslims running for office, Zahra said, "Know who you are and work with what you have. Oh, and raise a ton of money."



When 25-year-old Aisha

Yaqoob looked at her elected representatives in the Georgia legislature, she did not see people that looked like her. The American Muslim daughter of Pakistani immigrants decided to change that. On May 22, 2018, Yaqoob won her Democratic primary election with over 70 percent of the vote to become the Party's candidate to represent the 97th District in the Georgia House of Representatives. Traditionally home to Republican voters that had secured the Republican incumbent for over 25 years, the district has witnessed a slow and steady shift in demographics that includes a growing number of Asian and Hispanic residents. The change provided Yaqoob's campaign the opportunity to attempt to turn the state assembly seat blue.

Yaqoob's involvement in the political sphere began young. At the age of 22, in 2015, she founded the Georgia Muslim Voter Project, a non-partisan nonprofit organization that aims to increase voter turnout in the American Muslim community. The project was featured by national news outlets and featured on MTV as an example of growing youth-led grassroots political engagement efforts leading up to the 2016 presidential elections.

Her political organizing experience was also augmented by participating in the Congressional Leadership Development Program offered by the Muslim Public Affairs Council. This connected her to fellow American Muslims launching

political and organizing careers. After earning her Masters of Public Administration and Policy from the University of Georgia in 2016, Yaqoob became the Policy Director at the Atlanta chapter of Asian Americans Advancing Justice. The position introduced her to the legislative process and advocacy at the state capitol and gave her the experience she needed to launch her own campaign.

She believes that the basic lack of political access for immigrant and ethnic communities in her district is what has determined the Republican stronghold on District 97. Therefore, she was sure to provide mailers in multiple languages and attend events with translators for the various specific communities that made up her would-be constituency. This strategy required a considerable amount of financial and human resources. For Yaqoob, the central pillar of her strategy was to translate voter and political access into concrete political support. She notes that the Republican strategy in Georgia, which played in her district, was simply to hope that minority and immigrant communities would stay away from the polls.

By the end of her campaign, Yaqoob raised nearly \$150,000 and earned the endorsements of over a dozen groups, committees, and organizations including Hillary Clinton, Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, People for the American Way, Emily's List, and Democracy for America. Yaqoob did not win her election but plans on remaining politically engaged and fighting for political access for underrepresented communities.



\$16.9 million

RAISED BY AMERICAN
MUSLIM CANDIDATES
FOR CONGRESS
BETWEEN 2016-2019



“My God, the elected leadership in this state is so backward and so broken.” And with that realization, Abdul El-Sayed, a 33-year-old son of Egyptian immigrants, thought to become the next governor of his home state of Michigan.

ABDUL EL-SAYED

After gaining a medical doctorate from Columbia, a Ph.D. from Oxford, and a tenure-track position at Columbia’s School of Public Health, El-Sayed decided that it wasn’t enough to write and research—he wanted to impact direct policy. He left his academic position and became the executive director of the Detroit Health Department in 2015.

When he witnessed a 10-year difference in life expectancy on his drive to work, merely 30 minutes out from the community he grew up in, he felt compelled to do more. It impressed upon him the necessity to move into a position where he could make the biggest positive impact.

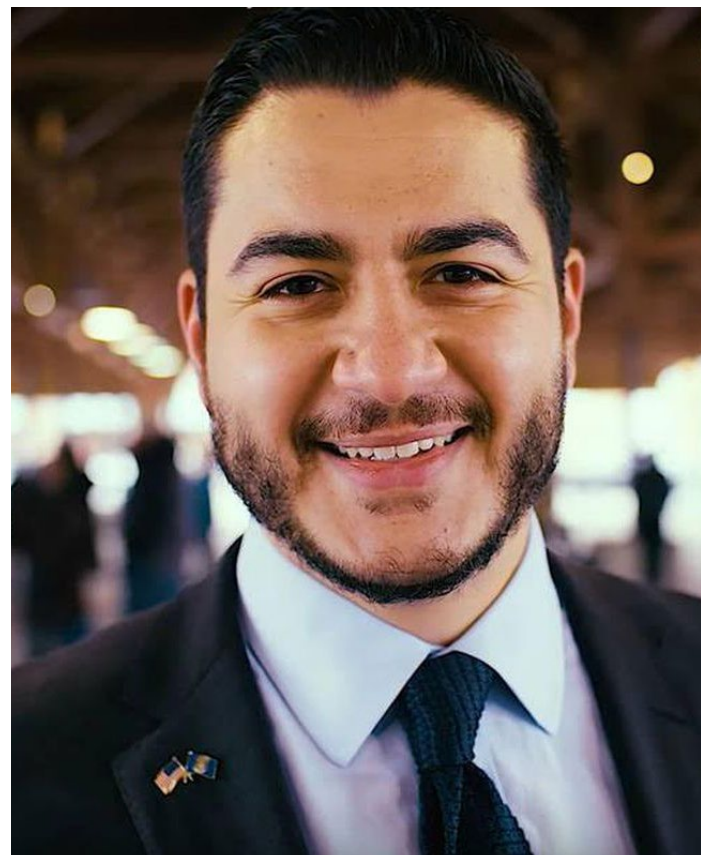
This reality, coupled with the hope of building a better future for his child, motivated El-Sayed to run for governor on a platform that embraced Medicare for all, environmental protections, debt-free and tuition-free higher education, and a pathway to 100 percent renewable energy.

El-Sayed’s campaign was built both as a message and movement: “For the people, by the people.” The campaign was centered around meeting the basic needs of average voters in Michigan by changing the status quo in political organizing. The campaign engaged in a statewide listening tour with local community groups and participated in town halls to better understand the way state-level policies impacted constituents from all backgrounds. After gaining enough grassroots support, El-Sayed engaged the formal political institutions and structures of the Democratic Party to seek support for his campaign’s platform.

The El-Sayed campaign planned a multi-tiered financial strategy from the outset that focused on reaching the support of the average, individual donor regardless of the amount contributed. The campaign intentionally eschewed

corporate and traditional big-donor sponsorship in order to align its grassroots message with its operational strategy.

For future American Muslim candidates, El-Sayed advises that the greatest campaign investment is “finding people who share the belief in your vision, but also know things that you do not and can help in ways you didn’t know possible.” He argues that drawing experienced talent to one’s campaign happens naturally if a campaign’s political message is aligned with voter values. “A leader must also be willing to invite constructive and sometimes tough feedback seriously,” he says. “Politics is about leadership and if you want to see how a leader operates, look at them and their family. Your campaign team, constituents and supporters become your professional family.”



AMERICAN MUSLIM GRASSROOTS POLITICAL ORGANIZING

With the current parity-gap in Muslim representation, grassroots mobilization can serve as an effective way to achieve significant and long-term change for the community. But grassroots movements don't just happen overnight. They require certain key elements to be successful. The campaigns of American Muslims highlighted in this report provide a first-hand look at how those elements can be combined—clarity of objectives, direct engagement with community members of all backgrounds on issues that affect them regardless of faith or identity, and fundraising through small donations without special interest backing.

Any movement must be goal-oriented, but setting achievable, measurable, and specific goals is imperative for grassroots campaigns. This ensures that scarce resources are not expended on a vague or undefined objective that might never come to fruition. Whether a candidate is running for school board or governor, it is critical that the campaign is hyper-aware of the votes it will take to win, the funds needed to reach out to those voters, and the volunteer recruitment efforts necessary to execute on strategies.

Grassroots activists and community advocates must create effective strategies that bridge the gap between goals and action. Such strategies rely on the involvement and collaboration of many individuals to elevate the work of others. A single canvasser can knock on 20 doors in an hour, a candidate might make the same number of fundraising

calls in that same time, and every person reached should be used as a springboard to five more potential voters, volunteers, or donors. By prioritizing real connections and using peer-to-peer strategies, grassroots outreach can take on exponential growth.

American Muslims organizers must ask themselves serious questions: Communication is imperative to reach critical mass, so how do we message to a community as diverse as the American Muslim community? Are they also talking to allies? Do they actively message to change the perceptions of those who don't support them? These are crucial questions that must be answered for a grassroots movement to be effective. By emphasizing the needs of people and their communities, American Muslim messaging has the power to reach across identity boundaries without compromising on ideals and values.

In addition to the personal approach, grassroots movements need to take advantage of new media to build credibility and expand their audience. New media, such as social media platforms, are an excellent tool to amplify recruitment, messaging, and fundraising efforts. Fundraising itself is critical to grassroots success: campaigns of all sizes live and die by how much they can raise, and there is an immense amount of money being spent on anti-Muslim organizing. American Muslim candidates in the 2018 cycle have shown that with enough small, individual donations, we can match the fundraising power of special interests.

The execution of all of this, then, hinges on being able to engage as many people who agree with the cause and vision as possible. This means building coalitions on intersectional grounds, ensuring the cause is community-focused, and participating in peer-to-peer outreach, whether it be door-knocking, phone-banking, or through digital media.

In this section, three successful grassroots political organizing campaigns are profiled as case studies on different types of organizing: coalition-based, digital media-focused, and grassroots driven.

COALITION-BASED, MULTI-LEVEL ADVOCACY: THE ANTI-CVE WIN IN LOS ANGELES

The Los Angeles Muslim community, the fourth largest in the country, is no stranger to government overreach and surveillance. In a well-documented case of federal duplicity, Craig Monteilh—a convicted criminal guilty of fraud and identity theft—was placed by the FBI in an Orange County mosque as an informant intended to root out would-be radicals and terrorist sympathizers. Instead of finding religious extremists, Monteilh was reported to the FBI by the community leadership itself, all while the federal agency was assuring the mosque that it had no intention of ever spying or surveilling the community.²⁶

In another case the following year, the Los Angeles Police Department announced a plan to map all Muslim communities in a suspicionless and unconstitutional surveillance program that paralleled the notorious one of the New York Police Department.^{27,28} Given this background, when the Obama administration announced its Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program in 2015 with Los Angeles as a “pilot” city, local Muslim communities worked together with allied organizations to push back against government overreach.

Unveiled in 2011 and housed in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), CVE was the Obama administration’s attempt to take a long-term, systemic approach to counterterrorism that focused on targeting the ideological sources of violence. CVE programs charge community members and civil society organizations with identifying individuals at risk for radicalization and connecting these individuals with programs designed to divert them away from extremism. More dangerously, it asks community groups to identify ideas that might contribute to “radicalization.” Though they sound harmless, CVE programs directly and indirectly task federal law enforcement with collecting information about, and potentially criminalizing, Muslim communities on the baseless notion that their membership might become “radicalized.”

An even more fundamental problem with CVE is that despite years of research, there is no statistical evidence that it contributes to reducing extremism. Instead, CVE programs stigmatize and marginalize the Muslim community by treating all its members as suspects and by holding an entire community responsible for the actions of others. In

securitizing community development efforts, CVE programs create a climate of fear and self-censorship, where people must watch what they say out of fear of being monitored.

Faced with this unwarranted targeting of their community, civil rights organizations like CAIR California, the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California (ACLU), MPower Change, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice banded together to form a multi-pronged challenge to the government’s CVE program in Los Angeles. Broad-based resistance to the L.A. program served as a real-time and unfolding model for advocates nationwide to recognize the threat posed by seemingly innocuous government engagement and surveillance efforts.

Despite strong opposition from an array of community groups, the federal CVE pilot project began with the Muslim Public Affairs Council’s (MPAC) “Safe Spaces” initiative which sought to create community-based dialogue around the problem of religious extremism and provide resources to those dealing with the problem.

²⁶ “The Convert.” This American Life. August 10, 2012. <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/471/the-convert>.

²⁷ Winton, Richard, Teresa Watanabe, and Greg Krikorian. “LAPD Defends Muslim Mapping Effort.” Los Angeles Times. November 10,

²⁸ “Factsheet: The NYPD Muslim Surveillance Program.” American Civil Liberties Union. <https://www.aclu.org/other/factsheet-nypd-muslim-surveillance-program>.

That project contributed to the identification of L.A. by the DHS as a recipient of a \$425,000 CVE grant under the Trump administration. By this time, the city's anti-CVE coalition, already activated through various channels and well-coordinated through long-standing relationships, was able to push the city council to eventually reject the federal funding.

CAIR started the campaign to block the CVE funds by mobilizing its supporters and asking community members to call and email the mayor's office and their councilmembers to oppose the city's acceptance of the funds. People wrote op-eds in major newspapers and the story gained national media attention. At the same time, the ACLU, in coordination with CAIR, pursued litigation against the city of Los Angeles and exposed the program's details to the public through the recovery of sensitive information via FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) requests. On the digital front, MPower Change ran a nationwide petition and publicity campaign against the program, which simultaneously empowered CAIR and other advocacy organizations to make the case about the detrimental nature of CVE before city officials.

What started as a grassroots community organizing effort ended as a national victory for American Muslim civil rights. In August 2018, the city of Los Angeles announced that it turned down \$425,000 in CVE funding from the Trump administration. "American Muslims are not asking for special treatment," said CAIR-LA Executive Director Hussam Ayloush. "We refuse to be treated as second-class citizens in our country and cities. We just want respect and dignity. Is it too much to ask?"

DIGITAL ADVOCACY: MPOWER CHANGE AND #MYMUSLIMVOTE

The historic victories in the 2018 midterm election would not have been possible without a deep community-organizing infrastructure that targeted traditionally underrepresented communities. The "My Muslim Vote" campaign functioned as a key component of building this infrastructure and awakening the American Muslim voter in what is likely the largest Muslim-focused civic engagement drive in U.S. history.

MPower Change launched the "My Muslim Vote" campaign during the 2016 election. By the time the 2018 midterm elections rolled around, 40 Muslim and ally organizations had come together for the civic engagement project. The campaign was driven as a cross-platform campaign using MPower Change's email list, social media, phone banking, and grassroots events, many of which were held at mosques across 15 states.

MPower Change hosted a national Muslim voter registration day on August 24, 2018, that included 42 events across 15 states and resulted in nearly 1,200 direct voter registrations and pledges. To augment the physical presence with a digital campaign, MPower coordinated four different "Twitter moments" under the hashtags #mymuslimvote and #callingallmuslims. The campaign also included a volunteer-driven phone banking day across twelve states, which hosted 10 phone bank parties, resulting in over 8,000 calls made in one day. In addition, MPower hosted a series of public and private webinars to mobilize the cross-platform campaign. The public webinars were made available on video for viewers to engage with on their own time and reached over 60,000 views.

The success of the "My Muslim Vote" campaign was built atop the organizational infrastructure MPower Change has built since its founding. MPower has quickly grown to become one of the largest Muslim-led

social and racial justice organizations in the United States. It combines digital organizing with grassroots, community-based organizing to conduct campaigns with a diverse set of ally organizations across the U.S.

Founded in 2014 by Linda Sarsour, Mark Crain, and Dustin Craun, who collectively brought together more than 40 years of community organizing experience, the intention was to build a grassroots organization rooted in the diverse Muslim communities in the United States. Combining their experiences in faith-based, local, and digital organizing, together they convened a group of leading American Muslim organizers and faith leaders to set the spiritual, political, and organizational vision. Today, MPower Change has developed both a digital organizing team and a field team that leads on the ground organizing in key cities across the U.S.

Like other online activist platforms such as ColorofChange.org, MPower Change directly engages with Muslims and ally communities who are interested in community organizing. The diversity of the organizational leadership, the intersectionality of the campaigns and actions supported by the platform, and the strong focus on Muslim values makes MPower Change a unique voice in the Muslim community willing to take on important social justice issues.

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING: JETPAC'S PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWSHIP

Jetpac's Public Service Fellowship is a unique program that identifies and trains American Muslims to run for political office. Launched in February of 2017 with an open call for Muslims who wanted to run for office, the fellowship received over 100 applicants from 17 different states in a single day. Since then, 32 organizers have graduated from the program and 13 of those have gone on to win public office.

The fellowship, taught by Jetpac co-founders Shaun Kennedy and Nadeem Mazen, focuses on "people-powered politics," and emphasizes grassroots mobilization through peer-to-peer outreach. Where traditional campaigns focus on convincing high-propensity voters (often called "super voters") to vote for their candidate, Jetpac's training teaches candidates to broaden their engagement to a larger portion of voters—knocking on tens of thousands of doors to encourage everyone to vote. In so doing, Jetpac's fellows invariably increase voter turnout and defeat incumbents by bringing more voters to the table.

Sarah Khatib, a 2017 Jetpac fellow who won both a representative town meeting position and a planning board election in Walpole, Mass., is an excellent example of winning an election with first-time voters. Khatib's mid-year local election saw down-ballot voter turnout (voting at lower

levels of office) increase to the highest levels in three decades—this increase in turnout was closely correlated to her 900+ vote margin of victory over her anti-Muslim opponent.

Canvassing and phone-banking—doors and phones—are the primary methods of outreach for any successful grassroots campaign. But in addition to those mainstays, Jetpac's fellows are taught effective ways of engaging potential voters and donors through email and social media. Using targeted and personalized "brute force" outreach, Jetpac's local-level fellows have been able to raise as much as \$2,000 per day in small donations through digital outreach. All of its fellows refuse PAC and corporate donations, and Jetpac teaches fellows how to leverage issues to increase individual contributions to counter the large amount of special interest money that fuels our political status quo. With an increasingly

digital-native population intent on claiming their electoral power, social media and digital communications are imperative to mobilizing both votes and money at the grassroots level.

News media plays a large role in the perception of American Muslim candidates. Too often, the American Muslim community is targeted by misleading and harmful stories that—regardless of their falsity—are given extensive media coverage. Even when this coverage decries Islamophobia, it often hurts Muslim political campaigns because of the airtime it gives to the Islamophobic attacks. Jetpac teaches fellows how to engage with reporters to ensure fair coverage. Fellows are taught to pivot to the positives of their campaign, rather than focus on identity or get defensive over Islamophobic allegations, and to call out reporters who propagate unsubstantiated and obviously bigoted stories.

American Muslim political influence will be powered by real people in real communities, and Jetpac's Public Service Fellowship provides the training to engage and motivate that community at all levels.

THE AMERICAN MUSLIM ROAD TO 2020

If the American Muslim community hopes to continue its steady rise to political empowerment on the road to the 2020 presidential and congressional elections, it would be wise to heed the lessons taught by the candidates and organizations reviewed in this report. Perhaps more than any particular strategy or tactic suggested by American Muslim candidates, their leadership teaches organizers that in the current moment of political cynicism and social discord the characteristics of willpower, honesty, and integrity matter more than ever. The candidates profiled here argue that in the age of inauthenticity and “fake news,” political campaigns must be built on truth and substance and must offer concrete solutions to local problems.

In order to do this, American Muslim organizers must work across and between multiple social and political groups that address the intersectional issues that impact all American citizens and not just their communities. This often requires working on issues that may—on the surface level—appear to be at odds with traditional community norms and values. However, working through broad coalitions to achieve social justice and equity goals will not only benefit Muslim communities but also ensure the right to dignity and respect for other marginalized and targeted groups.

American Muslim political organizations must also work across multiple platforms, utilizing social media, grassroots, and conventional media to mobilize voters in multiple constituencies. To do this effectively, organizations should work in strong institutional partnerships, avoid redundancy and rivalry, and enhance one another's strategic assets through efficient resources sharing mechanisms.

Finally, to be effective in the 2020 elections, American Muslim organizers and potential candidates must be willing to promote and work in deep collaboration with youth-designed and youth-led campaigns. Ultimately, learning how to bridge the gaps in the American Muslim community between generations, religious sensibilities, and ethnic/racial groups will yield the fruits necessary to grow as a mature political class poised to make a difference in 2020.

AMERICAN MUSLIMS THAT RAN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE BETWEEN 2016-2019

This data is gathered through a survey of media sources, as well as through outreach to CAIR and Jetpac professional networks and donor bases. It is a work in progress and subject to change. To suggest additions, revisions, or adjustments, please contact info@cair.com.

NAME	STATE	LEGISLATIVE BODY	LEVEL OF OFFICE	MOST RECENT ELECTION YEAR	OTHER ELECTIONS
Deedra Abboud	AZ	U.S. Senate	CONGRESS	2018	
Johnny Martin	AZ	AZ House of Representatives	SL	2018	
Anila Ali	CA	Irvine City Council	LOCAL	2016	
Abraham Khan	CA	Superior Court of Los Angeles County	JUDICIARY	2018	
Ahmad Zahra	CA	Fullerton City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Al Jabbar	CA	Anaheim Union High School District Board of Trustees	LOCAL	2018	2014
Asif Mahmood	CA	CA Department of Insurance	SW	2018	
Cheryl Sudduth	CA	West County Wastewater District Director	COUNTY	2018	
Farrah Khan	CA	Irvine City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Fauzia Siddiqui Rizvi	CA	Corona City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Fayaz Nawabi	CA	San Diego City Council	LOCAL	2018	
George Abdallah Jr.	CA	Superior Court of San Joaquin County	JUDICIARY	2018	
Kia Hamadanchy	CA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	2018
Omar Qudrat	CA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Omar Siddiqui	CA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Sabuhi Siddique	CA	San Jose City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Sam Jammal	CA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Shamus Sayed	CA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Ali Sajjad Taj	CA	CA State Senate	SL	2018	2018 (SPECIAL)
Sabina Zafar	CA	San Ramon City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Maimona Afzal Berta	CA	Franklin-McKinley Board of Education	LOCAL	2018	
Javed Ellahie	CA	Monte Sereno City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Halim Dhanidina	CA	CA District 2 Court of Appeal	JUDICIARY	2018	
Mohammad-Ali Mazarei	CA	CA State Assembly	SL	2018	

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Tazheen “Taz” Nizam	CA	Vista City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Ali Saleh	CA	CA State Senate	SL	2019	
Kaisar Ahmed	CA	San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors	COUNTY	2020	
Shahid Buttar	CA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2020	2018
Aisha Wahab	CA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2020	
Fahd Syed	CT	Waterbury Board of Aldermen	LOCAL	2017	
M. Saud Anwar	CT	South Windsor City Council	LOCAL	2017	2013, 2015
Maryam Khan	CT	Windsor Board of Education	LOCAL	2017	
Barbara Sharief	FL	Broward County Commission	COUNTY	2016	2013
Duysevi (Sevi) Miyar	FL	FL House of Representatives	SL	2016	
Ahmad Saadaldin	FL	FL House of Representatives	SL	2017	
Asima Azam	FL	Orlando City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Sarah El-Badri	FL	Orlando City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Altaf Ahmed	FL	Broward County Commission	COUNTY	2018	
Saima Farooqui	FL	FL House of Representatives	SL	2018	
Rizwan Ahmed	FL	FL State House	SL	2018	
Annisa Karim	FL	FL State Senate	SL	2018	
Ruta Jouniari	FL	Sarasota County Commission	COUNTY	2018	
Amira Fox	FL	State Attorney	JUDICIARY	2018	
Khurram Wahid	FL	Coral Springs City Commission	LOCAL	2019	
Imtiaz Ahmad Mohammad	FL	FL House of Representatives	SL	2020	
Tokhir “T.R.” Radjabov	GA	GA House of Representatives	SL	2016	
Ahmed Hassan	GA	Clarkston City Council	LOCAL	2017	2013
Amir Farokhi	GA	Atlanta City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Bassem Fakhoury	GA	Roswell City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Liliana Bakhtiari	GA	Atlanta City Council	LOCAL	2017	2017
Mohammed Ali Bhuiyan	GA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2017	2017
Aisha Yaqoob	GA	Georgia House of Representatives	SL	2018	
Sheikh Rahman	GA	GA State Senate	SL	2018	
Nabilah Islam	GA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2020	
Abshir Mohamed Omar	IA	Des Moines City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Mazahir Salih	IA	Iowa City, City Council	LOCAL	2017	

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Ako Abdul-Samad	IA	Iowa House of Representatives	SL	2018	2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016
Harish Patel	IL	IL House of Representatives	SL	2016	
Anisha Patel	IL	Arlington Heights School Board	LOCAL	2017	
Asma Akhras	IL	Indian Prairie Public Library Board of Trustees	LOCAL	2017	
Bahira Karim	IL	Village of Worth Board of Trustees	LOCAL	2017	
Dahoud “Dave” Shalabi	IL	Orland Park School Board of Education	LOCAL	2017	
Karim Khoja	IL	Village of Glenview Board of Trustees	LOCAL	2017	2017
Mehrunisa Qayyum	IL	Downers Grove Township Board of Trustees	LOCAL	2017	
Abdelnasser Rashid	IL	Cook County Board of Commissioners	COUNTY	2018	
Ahmed Salim	IL	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Bushra Amiwala	IL	Cook County Board of Commissioners	COUNTY	2018	
Dilara Sayeed	IL	IL House of Representatives	SL	2018	
Hadiya Afzal	IL	Dupage County Board	COUNTY	2018	
Sameena Mustafa	IL	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Zahra Suratwala	IL	DuPage County, County Board	COUNTY	2018	
Neill Mohammad	IL	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Sadia Gul Covert	IL	Dupage County Board	COUNTY	2018	
Andre Carson	IN	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016
Patricia O’Brien	MA	Burlington Town Meeting	LOCAL	2016	2012
Afroz Khan	MA	Newburyport City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Deeqo Jibril	MA	Boston City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Hassan Williams	MA	Boston City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Hazem Mahmoud	MA	Newburyport City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Kemal Bozkurt	MA	Lawrence Public Schools School Board	LOCAL	2017	2017
Mehreen Butt	MA	Wakefield Town Council	LOCAL	2017	
Nichole Mossalam	MA	Malden School Committee	LOCAL	2017	
Omar Boukili	MA	Somerville Board of Alderman	LOCAL	2017	
Rashid Shaikh	MA	Shrewsbury Town Meeting Member	LOCAL	2017	
Sarah Khatib	MA	Walpole Planning Board	LOCAL	2017	

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Sumbul Siddiqui	MA	Cambridge City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Charles Clemons Muhammad	MA	MA House of Representatives	SL	2018	
Nadeem Mazen	MA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Tahirah Amatul-Wadud	MA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Mohammad Dar	MA	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2020	
Raaheela Ahmed	MD	Prince George's County Public Schools School Board	COUNTY	2016	2012
Rida Bukhari-Rizvi	MD	Montgomery County Central Democratic Committee	PARTY	2016	
Bilal Ali	MD	MD House of Delegates	SL	2017	
Talib Karim	MD	Hyattsville City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Aisha Khan	MD	MD House of Delegates	SL	2018	
Anis Ahmed	MD	MD House of Delegates	SL	2018	
Fatmata Barrie	MD	MD House of Delegates	SL	2018	
Hamza Khan	MD	MD House of Delegates	SL	2018	
Hassan Giordano	MD	Baltimore City Circuit Court	JUDICIARY	2018	
Hassan "Jay" Jalisi	MD	MD House of Delegates	SL	2018	2014
Marcus Goodwin	MD	Washington DC City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Mohammad Siddique	MD	Montgomery County Council	COUNTY	2018	
Nadia Hashimi	MD	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Sean Stinnett	MD	MD House of Delegates	SL	2018	
Shabnam Ahmed	MD	MD House of Delegates	SL	2018	
Sabina Taj	MD	Howard County Board of Education	COUNTY	2018	
Babur Lateef	MD	Prince William County School Board	COUNTY	2018	
Pious Ali	ME	Portland City Council	LOCAL	2016	
Adel Mozip	MI	Dearborn Public Schools Board	LOCAL	2016	
Fadwa Hammoud	MI	Dearborn Public Schools School Board	LOCAL	2016	
Hussein Berry	MI	Dearborn Public Schools Board	LOCAL	2016	
Khodr Farhat	MI	Dearborn Public Schools School Board	LOCAL	2016	2016
Yameen Jaffer	MI	Pittsfield Board of Trustees	LOCAL	2016	
Abdikadir (AK) Hassan	MI	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	LOCAL	2017	
Abu Musa	MI	Hamtramck City Council	LOCAL	2017	2013, 2015
Bill Saad	MI	Underground Storage Tank Authority Board	SW	2017	

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Bill Bazzi	MI	Dearborne Heights City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Fadel Al-Marsoumi	MI	Hamtramck City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Fayrouz Bazzi	MI	Dearborn City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Hakim Fakhoury	MI	Dearborn City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Jeff Mallad	MI	Dearborn Heights City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Mariam Bazzi	MI	Wayne County Circuit Court	JUDICIARY	2017	
Mike Sareini	MI	Dearborn City Council	LOCAL	2017	2014
Mo Baydoun	MI	Deaborn Heights City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Mohammed Al-Somiri	MI	Hamtramck City Council	LOCAL	2017	2015
Nada Al-Hanooti	MI	Dearborn City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Ramez (Zack) Haidar	MI	Dearborn City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Susan Dabaja	MI	Dearborn City Council	LOCAL	2017	2013
Tarek Baydoun	MI	Dearborn City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Celia Nasser	MI	Dearborn School Board	LOCAL	2017	
Abdul "Al" Haidous	MI	Wayne County Commission	COUNTY	2018	2014
Abdul El-Sayed	MI	MI Governor	SW	2018	
Abdullah Hammoud	MI	MI House of Representatives	SL	2018	2016
Abraham Aiyash	MI	MI State Senate	SL	2018	
Anam Miah	MI	Michigan State Senate	SL	2018	
Fayrouz Saad	MI	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Ghulam Qadir	MI	MI State Senate	SL	2018	
Mohammed Hassan	MI	Wayne County Commission	COUNTY	2018	2018
Nasim Ansari	MI	Kalamazoo County Council	COUNTY	2018	
Rabbi Alam	MI	MI House of Representatives	SL	2018	
Rashida Tlaib	MI	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Saad Almasmari	MI	MI House of Representatives	SL	2018	
Sam Baydoun	MI	Wayne County Commission	COUNTY	2018	
Sam Salamey	MI	MI District Courts	JUDICIARY	2018	2012
Syed Rob	MI	MI State House	SL	2018	
Billy Amen	MI	Dearborn School Board	LOCAL	2018	
Khalil El-Saghir	MI	Dearborn School Board	LOCAL	2018	
Khodr Farhat	MI	Dearborn School Board	LOCAL	2018	
Adel A. Harb	MI	Wayne County Circuit Court	JUDICIARY	2018	2016
Adel A. Mozip	MI	Dearborn School Board	LOCAL	2018	2016
Aamina Ahmed	MI	Plymouth Canton Community School District	LOCAL	2018	
David Turfe	MI	MI District Courts	JUDICIARY	2018	
Aliyah Sabree	MI	MI District Courts	JUDICIARY	2018	

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Salwa Fawaz	MI	Crestwood School Board	LOCAL	2018	
Yasir Khogali	MI	City of Plymouth District Library Board	LOCAL	2018	
Abdi Daisane	MN	St Cloud City Council	LOCAL	2016	
Abdi Warsame	MN	Minneapolis City Council	LOCAL	2017	2013
Abdi Gurhan Mohamed	MN	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	LOCAL	2017	
Fartun Ahmed	MN	Hopkins Public Schools School Board	LOCAL	2017	
Jeremiah Ellison	MN	Minneapolis City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Mohamed Farah	MN	Minneapolis City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Mohamed Barre	MN	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	LOCAL	2017	
Amir Malik	MN	MN House of Representatives	SL	2018	
Ilhan Omar	MN	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Jamal Abdulahi	MN	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Keith Ellison	MN	MN Attorney General	SW	2018	2018
Mohamud Noor	MN	MN House of Representatives	SL	2018	2014, 2016
Regina Mustafa	MN	Rochester City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Ali Chehem	MN	US Senate	CONGRESS	2018	
Zarina Baber	MN	MN Lt. Governor	SW	2018	
Abdulkadir Abdalla	MN	MN State House	SL	2018	
Osman Ahmed	MN	MN State House	SL	2018	
Omar Fateh	MN	MN State House	SL	2018	
Hodan Hassan	MN	MN State House	SL	2018	
Haaris Pasha	MN	MN State House	SL	2018	
Fadumo Taani	MN	MN State House	SL	2018	
Siad Ali	MN	Minneapolis Board of Education	LOCAL	2018	2014
Fardousa Jama	MN	Mankato City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Abdi Roble	MN	Rochester School Board	LOCAL	2018	
Hala Asamarai	MN	Columbia Heights School Board	LOCAL	2018	2016
Sharon Dumas El-Amin	MN	Minneapolis School Board	LOCAL	2018	
Penny Hubbard	MO	MO House of Representatives	SL	2016	2010, 2012, 2014
Nida Aziz Allam	NC	NC Democratic Party	PARTY	2017	
Zainab Baloch	NC	Raleigh City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Fahiym Hanna	NC	Guilford County Board of Commissioners	COUNTY	2018	
Mujtaba Mohammed	NC	NC State Senate	SL	2018	

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Naveed Aziz	NC	NC State Senate	SL	2018	2016
Nasif Majeed	NC	NC State House of Representatives	SL	2018	
Hassan Essa	NH	Manchester City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Aboul Khan	NH	NH House of Representatives	SL	2018	2012, 2016
Safiya Wazir	NH	NH State House	SL	2018	
Adnan Zakaria	NJ	Prospect Park City Council	LOCAL	2016	
Azim Uddin	NJ	Franklin Township Council	COUNTY	2016	
Azra Baig	NJ	South Brunswick Board of Education	LOCAL	2016	2013
Baseemah Beasley	NJ	Irvington Democratic Party	PARTY	2016	
Fahim Abedrabbo	NJ	Clifton Public Schools School Board	LOCAL	2016	
Kalimah Ahmad	NJ	Jersey City Municipal Court	JUDICIARY	2016	
Khalil Rashidi	NJ	Newark Public Schools Board of Education	LOCAL	2016	2013
Mohammed Hameeduddin	NJ	Teaneck City Council	LOCAL	2016	2010
Shahin Khalique	NJ	Paterson City Council	LOCAL	2016	
Sharifa Salaam	NJ	East Orange, Irvington, and Newark Municipal Courts	JUDICIARY	2016	2014
Alfred Mohammed	NJ	Linden City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Atif Nazir	NJ	Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders	COUNTY	2017	
Frank Gilliam	NJ	City of Atlantic City	LOCAL	2017	
Mohammed Hussain	NJ	Prospect Park Board of Education	LOCAL	2017	2011, 2014
Nadia Kahf	NJ	Gov. Murphy Transition Team: Law and Justice Committee	SW	2017	
Nancy Uddin	NJ	Monmouth Regional HS, School Board	LOCAL	2017	
Nuran Nabi	NJ	Plainsboro Township Committee	LOCAL	2017	2007
Nureed Saeed	NJ	South Orange Board of Trustees	LOCAL	2017	
Shariq Ahmad	NJ	Edison Democratic Organization	PARTY	2017	
Steven Brister	NJ	East Orange City Municipal Court	LOCAL	2017	
Tahsina Ahmed	NJ	Borough of Haledon City Council	LOCAL	2017	2015
Ted Green	NJ	East Orange City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Zeeshan Saddiqi	NJ	Old Bridge Town Council	LOCAL	2017	
Rashidah Hasan	NJ	Orange City Municipal Court	JUDICIARY	2017	
Agha Khan	NJ	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	2016

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Alaa “Al” Abdelaziz	NJ	Paterson City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Alaa “Al” Abdel-Aziz	NJ	Paterson City Council	LOCAL	2018	2016
Aslon Goow	NJ	Paterson City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Assad Akhter	NJ	Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders	COUNTY	2018	2016
Dawn Haynes	NJ	Newark Public Schools School Board	LOCAL	2018	
Hassan Abdul-Rasheed	NJ	Orange City Council	LOCAL	2018	2006, 2010
Hazim Yassin	NJ	Red Bank City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Mohamed Khairullah	NJ	Borough of Prospect Park	LOCAL	2018	2006, 2010, 2014
Mohammed Akhtaruzzaman	NJ	Paterson City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Mohammed Raqeeb	NJ	Piscataway Township Council	LOCAL	2018	
Mussab Ali	NJ	Jersey City Public Schools Board of Education	LOCAL	2018	2017
Rashon Hasan	NJ	Newark City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Salim Patel	NJ	Passaic City Council	COUNTY	2018	
Shahanaz Arjumand	NJ	Teaneck Township Board of Education	LOCAL	2018	
Shereef Elnahal	NJ	NJ Department of Health Commissioner	SW	2018	
Siaka Sherif	NJ	Orange Board of Education	LOCAL	2018	
Mariam Khan	NJ	Dennis Township Board of Education	LOCAL	2018	
Mohammad Ramadan	NJ	Haledon Board of Education	LOCAL	2018	
Alaa Matari	NJ	Prospect Park Borough Councilman	LOCAL	2018	
Adam Chaabane	NJ	Woodland Park Board of Education	LOCAL	2018	
Amany Ramadan	NJ	Paterson Board of Education	LOCAL	2018	
Alturric Kenney	NJ	Essex County Surrogate’s Court	JUDICIARY	2018	2018
Jamillah Beasley-McCleod	NJ	Irvington Municipal Council	LOCAL	2019	
Mustafa Al-Mutazzim Brent	NJ	East Orange City Council	LOCAL	2019	2015
Rizwan Malik	NJ	Atlantic City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Sadaf Jaffer	NJ	Montgomery Township Mayor	LOCAL	2019	
Mahmoud Mahmoud	NJ	NJ General Assembly	SL	2019	
Zahid Quraishi	NJ	U.S. Magistrate Court	JUDICIARY	2019	

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Awais Qazi	NJ	NJ General Assembly	SL	2019	
Adil Syed Ahmed	NJ	West New York Commissioner	LOCAL	2019	
Anjum Malik	NJ	Atlantic City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Md Hossain Morshed	NJ	Atlantic City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Abusaeed "Saeed" Asduha	NJ	Atlantic City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Muhammad "Anjun" Zia	NJ	Atlantic City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Mohammed Suhel Ahmed	NJ	Atlantic City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Hatem "Tim" Wahba	NJ	Middlesex County Sheriff	COUNTY	2019	
Eman El-Badawi	NJ	Cranbury Township Committee	LOCAL	2019	
Alp Basaran	NJ	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2020	
Abbas Akhil	NM	NM State House	SL	2018	
Jesse Sbaih	NV	US Senate	CONGRESS	2018	
Robert Jackson	NY	NY State Senate	SL	2018	2014, 2016
Tahseen Chowdhury	NY	NY State Senate	SL	2018	
Uzma Syed	NY	Syosset County School Committee	COUNTY	2018	2017
Omar Vaid	NY	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Shadia Tadros	NY	Syracuse City Court	JUDICIARY	2018	
Shahabuddeen Ally	NY	Manhattan Civil Court Judge	JUDICIARY	2018	
Charles Fall	NY	NY State Assembly	SL	2018	
Basheer Jones	OH	Cleveland City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Nadeen Hayden	OH	Cleveland Heights Municipal Court	JUDICIARY	2017	
Noha Eyada	OH	Mason City School District School Board	LOCAL	2017	
Mohamed Al-Hamdani	OH	Dayton Public Schools Board of Education	LOCAL	2018	
Ismail Mohamed	OH	OH State House	SL	2018	
Kayse Jama	OR	OR State Senate	SL	2018	2018
Kareem Kandil	PA	PA House of Representatives	SL	2018	2018
Nina Ahmad	PA	PA Lieutenant Governor	SW	2018	
Jason Dawkins	PA	PA State House	SL	2018	2014
Omar Sabir	PA	Philadelphia City Commission	LOCAL	2019	
Movita Johnson-Harrell	PA	PA House of Representatives	SL	2019 (Special)	
Naveen Malik	SD	South Dakota House of Representatives	SL	2018	

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Andre Canty	TN	Knox County School Board	COUNTY	2018	
Hana Ali	TN	TN House of Representatives	SL	2018	
Zulfat Suara	TN	Nashville Metropolitan Council	LOCAL	2019	
Abdel Elhassan	TX	Irving City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Ali A. Khorasani	TX	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Dalia Kasseb	TX	Pearland City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Omar Kadir	TX	Williamson County Commission	COUNTY	2018	
Salman Bhojani	TX	Euless City Council	LOCAL	2018	2016
Shayan Elahi	TX	Irving City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Syed Hassan	TX	Tarrant County Commissioners Court	COUNTY	2018	
Tahir Javed	TX	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Letitia Plummer	TX	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2018	
Rabeea Collier	TX	Texas District Courts	JUDICIARY	2018	
Nuzhat Hye	TX	Irving Independent School District Board of Trustees	LOCAL	2018	
Mohammad Usman Aijaz	TX	Sugar Land City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Nabila Mansoor	TX	Sugar Land City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Naushad Kermally	TX	Sugar Land City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Imran Khan	TX	US House of Representatives	CONGRESS	2020	
Mary Khalaf	UT	Ogden City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Hala Ayala	VA	VA House of Delegates	SL	2017	
Hannah Rishq	VA	Virginia State House of Delegates	SL	2017	
Jamaal Johnston	VA	VA House of Delegates	SL	2017	
Sam Rasoul	VA	VA House of Delegates	SL	2017	2014
Atif Qarni	VA	Commonwealth of Virginia, Secretary of Education	SW	2018	
Mo Seifeldein	VA	Alexandria City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Haseeb Javed	VA	Manassas Park City Council	LOCAL	2018	
Abrar Omeish	VA	Fairfax County School Board	COUNTY	2019	
Jasmine Moawad-Barrientos	VA	VA State Senate	SL	2019	
Yasmine Taeb	VA	VA State Senate	SL	2019	
Qasim Rashid	VA	Virginia State Senate	SL	2019	
Ghazala Hashmi	VA	Virginia State Senate	SL	2019	
Hassan Ahmad	VA	Virginia House of Delegates	SL	2019	
Sharafat Hussain	VA	Virginia State Senate	SL	2019	
Ibrahim Moiz	VA	Loudon County Board of Supervisors	COUNTY	2019	

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Ibraheem Samirah	VA	Virginia State House of Delegates	SL	2019 (Special)	
Faisal Gill	VT	Vermont Commons School Board	LOCAL	2017	
Ahmed Abdi	WA	Port of Seattle Commission	LOCAL	2017	
Ubah Aden	WA	Tukwila School Board	LOCAL	2017	
Zak Idan	WA	Tukwila City Council	LOCAL	2017	
Samba Baldeh	WI	Madison City Council	LOCAL	2019	2015, 2017
Syed Abbas	WI	Madison City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Minza Karim	WI	Middleton Cross Plains School Board	LOCAL	2019	
Akram Khan	WI	Mequon-Thiensville School Board	LOCAL	2019	
Isaak Mohamed	WI	Barron City Council	LOCAL	2019	
Faisal Ahmed	WI	Barron City Council	LOCAL	2019	

