



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
PAT QUINN

For Immediate Release

Thursday, January 30, 2014

Contact

Press Line: (312) 814-3158

Brooke Anderson Brooke.Anderson@illinois.gov

Grant Klinzman Grant.Klinzman@illinois.gov

Governor Quinn Receives Second Semiannual Report of the Muslim American Advisory Council

First-of-its-Kind Board Created to Give Voice to Muslims in Illinois

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn today received the second semiannual report of the Muslim American Advisory Council. The council is tasked with advising the Governor on ways to advance the role and civic participation of Muslim Americans in Illinois as well as ways in which Illinois can enhance trade and cooperation with Muslim-majority countries.

“Today’s report shows that we have made real progress in making sure that Illinois is the most welcoming state in the nation, but we still have much more that we can do,” Governor Quinn said. “Illinois is home to more than 400,000 Muslim Americans, and it is important that everyone has an opportunity for input in how their home state works, as strategies may be different based on different communities’ needs.”

Governor Quinn announced the creation of the Muslim American Advisory Council during Eid al-Fitr, the close of the holy month of Ramadan, in 2011. The first-of-its-kind council advises the Governor on appropriate policy developments and other issues of significance impacting Illinois’ Muslims. It brings important faith-based issues based on factual findings to the Governor’s attention and makes recommendations to address those issues.

The second semiannual report noted Governor Quinn has strongly supported important community initiatives, including the Illinois DREAM Act, and it provides recommendations for the future and a guide to help state employees better understand cultural and religious differences that may lead to confusion.

Recommendations included reforms that impact the Muslim community and the Illinois community at large:

- Create a year-round youth jobs program to provide Illinois youth with comprehensive training and employment opportunities in partnership with faith- and community-based organizations.
- Combat gun violence in the state of Illinois by investing in evidence-based program models using the Budgeting for Results model to evaluate state violence-reduction models.
- Reduce the number of liquor licenses in high-crime neighborhoods and direct the Illinois Fresh Food Fund to target these neighborhoods instead.
- Expand the Freedom from Drone Surveillance Act to include privately funded drone programs.
- Expand programs to help recent immigrants make the transition to living in Illinois to reduce disparities in service and anticipating larger Burmese, Congolese and Syrian refugee populations.

- Proclaim “Syrian Humanitarian Disaster Awareness Week” to highlight the 9.3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria and urge the people of Illinois to donate to humanitarian or medical organizations.
- Provide state employees with options for socially responsible investment opportunities and disseminate a cultural sensitivity guide to all state agencies. The guide explains many Muslim practices including dress practices, dietary restrictions and descriptions of prayer which many non-Muslims may not be familiar with.

In 2013, Governor Quinn hosted the first ever Iftar dinner at the Executive Mansion in Springfield, an interfaith tradition which began with President Thomas Jefferson but had never been done by an Illinois Governor. He also approved plans to establish the first health care facility in the nation to meet the needs of Muslim-American patients. He has also signed legislation to ensure that Muslim college students are not penalized for missing an exam on Muslim holy days. The council has commended Governor Quinn for striving to make Illinois the most welcoming state in the nation.

###