

MINUTES OF THE MAY 20, 2014 MEETING OF THE MUSLIM AMERICAN ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Muslim American Advisory Council (“MAAC” or the “Council”), pursuant to notice duly given, held a Meeting on May 20, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. in the James R. Thompson Center, 100 West Randolph Street, Suite 16-100, Chicago, Illinois 60601.

MAAC Members Present:

1. Kareem M. Irfan, Esq., Co-Chair
2. Sohair Omar, Co-Chair
3. Dr. Bambade Shakoor-Abdullah (via audio conference)
4. Sikirat Adigun
5. Dr. Irfan Ahmad (via audio conference)
6. Murad Moosa Bhaidani (via audio conference)
7. Mumtaz Champsi (via audio conference)
8. Clyde El-Amin
9. S. Jafer Hasnain (via audio conference)
10. Mohammed Kaiseruddin (via audio conference)
11. Dzafer Kulenovic (via audio conference)
12. Dr. Sevil Kutay
13. Tariq Malhance
14. Salim Al Nurridin (via audio conference)
15. Eboo Patel (via audio conference)
16. Aisha Qadeem (via audio conference)
17. Ahmed Rehab (via audio conference)

MAAC Members Absent:

1. Tariq El-Amin
2. Najjar Abdul-Musawwir
3. Imad Rahman
4. Dr. Mohammad Zaher Sahloul
5. Safaa Zarzour, Esq.

Guests Present:

Dr. Theresa Hawley, Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development
Itedal Shalabi, Arab American Family Services
Mark Zajac, Office of the Governor

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Co-Chair Omar called the Meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

Mr. Zajac called the roll. There being six (6) Members physically present and eleven (11) Members participating via audio conference, a quorum was met.

II. Co-Chairs' Remarks

Co-Chair Omar welcomed the newest Member to the Council, Ms. Sikirat Adigun of the Nigerian Islamic Association.

She went on to note that Governor Quinn welcomed participants of Illinois Muslim ACTION! Day to the Executive Mansion on April 30, 2014, where he recognized the civic engagement of the community and encouraged community members to apply for positions at the State of Illinois. He also commended the work of MAAC and spoke to the importance of their policy recommendations.

Co-Chair Omar also informed the Members of the front page story in Crain's Chicago Business, "Keeping the Faith," dated May 19, 2014, regarding the introduction of onsite prayer and meditation rooms for employees at tech companies.

III. Adoption of the Minutes

Having a quorum, Minutes of the Meeting held on April 15, 2014 were taken up for consideration. Mr. Malhance made a motion for the adoption of the Minutes. Mr. El-Amin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Presentation of the Birth to Five Initiative

Dr. Hawley, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development ("OECD"), presented on Governor Quinn's Birth to Five initiative, a program that focuses on pre-natal care and preschool education to lower the achievement gap between students and produce a more educated and productive workforce. More broadly, she also discussed the function of OECD within the Governor's administration and its additional programs, including ExceleRate Illinois, a quality rating and improvement system for early learning programs throughout the State.

Members asked Dr. Hawley a variety of questions relating to the distribution of early learning programs in at-risk communities, the need to overcome language and cultural barriers to reach immigrant and refugee populations, and ways in which private, faith-based schools can work with OECD, to which Dr. Hawley provided thoughtful responses. Dr. Hawley and the Council agreed to work together to better reach Illinois' Muslim community.

V. Report by the Legislative Affairs Committee

Co-Chair Omar noted the passage of the drone surveillance bill in both the House and Senate. She also noted that the summer youth employment bill and juvenile justice resolution have not yet been passed, but are moving in both chambers.

She went on to encourage members to contact their state legislators to emphasize the Muslim community's commitments to those line items in the budget as the Fiscal Year 2015 budget is still being debated.

VI. Report by the Economic Development Committee

Mr. Hasnain informed the Council that the Economic Development Committee is working on its draft policy recommendations for the upcoming semiannual report. The Economic Development Committee also continues to work with the Islamic Foundation on their research project.

Co-Chair Omar encouraged the Economic Development Committee to coordinate with the Illinois Office of Trade and Investment as they plan their Fiscal Year 2015 Trade Mission Schedule.

VII. Report by the Communications Committee

Co-Chair Omar announced that she had been working with the Illinois Department of Human Rights to translate discrimination brochures into Arabic, which she would distribute to certain Members of the Council for further assistance. She also suggested the Council work with OECD to translate any materials that would aid in reaching Illinois' Muslim community.

VIII. Other Business

Co-Chair Omar reminded the Members that the deadline to submit draft recommendations for the third semiannual report has been extended. All draft recommendations are to be sent to Mr. Zajac by the end of the month, May 31, 2014.

Ms. Champsi and Mr. Al Nurridin discussed the proposed Barack Obama Presidential Library and requested letters of support. Ms. Champsi and Mr. Al Nurridin agreed to provide Members further details.

IX. Public Comment

Co-Chair Omar reminded the Members that the next Council meeting would take place on June 17, 2014.

Mr. Kaiseruddin informed the Members that the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago is promoting recycling and food drives in the Muslim American community.

X. Adjournment

Mr. Malhance made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Adigun seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The MAAC Meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:

Mark Zajac
Chief of Staff Dunn Fellow
Office of the Governor