Leadership or Pandering: Grading Our Elected Officials

One of the many ways we are fighting intolerance is by holding public officials accountable for the rhetoric they espouse. The Arab American Institute’s “Leadership or Pandering” series examines statements made by policymakers and candidates as they address divisive issues that provide clear opportunities to stand against bigotry. Though not comprehensive, and while no official can be judged fairly by any single action or statement, we hope that it will provide a useful look at the debate and its participants.

This edition of “Leadership or Pandering” examines xenophobia and the 2016 presidential primary through December 2015. While rhetoric tends to become more polarizing during election cycles, public dialogue was saturated with inflammatory rhetoric following the tragic terrorist attacks in Paris, France and San Bernardino, California.

In the wake of these attacks many of our elected officials, policymakers, and candidates exploited an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty by equating a humanitarian crisis with national security issues. Some of our public officials used mischaracterizations of some of the world’s most vulnerable populations, and cast blanket suspicion on entire communities. Some presidential candidates contributed to inflammatory rhetoric by saying they would not advocate for an American Muslim being President of the United States, others called for a ban on Muslims entering the U.S.

On the other hand, numerous leaders spoke out against fear-mongering and bigotry in the weeks following the attacks. Many made impassioned arguments for tolerance, and worked to uphold the American tradition of welcoming refugees.

We believe these times of heightened public sensitivities provide clear opportunities for public officials to demonstrate either leadership or pandering.

This edition of “Leadership or Pandering” is divided into two sections. Section I examines the rhetoric provided by the 2016 presidential primary candidates regarding Arab Americans, American Muslims, and refugees. Section II focuses exclusively on members of Congress, Governors, and other elected officials that have contributed to the national dialogue.

We hope this guide serves as an effective means for you to judge the statements by your own elected officials and candidates and hold them accountable for their rhetoric during such trying times.

**Rating Scale:**

👍 Spoke out against bigotry and attacks on Arabs, Muslims and the refugee resettlement program.

💰 Used bigoted statements in the wake of tragedies and exploited fear.

👍 Republican

👍 Democrat
President Barack Obama

“And when I hear folks say that well maybe we should just admit the Christians but not the Muslims, when I hear political leaders suggesting that there would be a religious test for which person who’s fleeing from a war-torn country is admitted, when some of those folks themselves come from families who benefited from protection when they were fleeing political persecution, that’s shameful. That’s not American. That’s not who we are. We don’t have a religious test for our compassion.” (Whitehouse.gov, 11/16/15)

“We cannot turn against one another by letting this fight be defined as a war between America and Islam.” (Whitehouse.gov, 12/6/15)

“But just as it is the responsibility of Muslims around the world to root out misguided ideas that lead to radicalization, it is the responsibility of all Americans—of every faith—to reject discrimination. It is our responsibility to reject religious tests on who we admit into this country. It’s our responsibility to reject proposals that Muslim Americans should somehow be treated differently. Because when we travel down that road, we lose. That kind of divisiveness, that betrayal of our values plays into the hands of groups like ISIL. Muslim Americans are our friends and our neighbors, our co-workers, our sports heroes—and, yes, they are our men and women in uniform who are willing to die in defense of our country.” (Medium, 12/06/15)

“We betray the efforts of the past if we fail to push back against bigotry in all its forms.” (WhiteHouse.gov, 12/9/15)

2016 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Former Governor of Florida Jeb Bush

“Look, refugees come to this country for all sorts of reasons – they don’t normally come with embedded terrorists in their midst. And that’s the challenge. The challenge is, this is a new form of influx...There are no Christian terrorists in the Middle East, they’re persecuted, they’re religious minorities. We’ve had a duty as we’ve always had, and it’s a noble one, to be able to provide support across the world. The United States has done this and we’ve done it effectively, and we can do it in this regard.” (New York Times, 11/17/15)

“My heart goes out to refugees and I do think we have a noble tradition of supporting refugees. But the screening process needs to be difficult and we err on the side of caution because unlike other refugee waves that we’ve seen in our country’s history, people weren’t embedding terrorist that want to destroy Western civilization, weren’t embedded amongst the beleaguered refugees. And now they are and we have to be extraordinarily cautious.” (Presidential TeleForum, 11/18/15)

“[We should not] send them [Syrian refugees] all back to a hell hole...We have a global tradition of taking care of refugees...we’ve done it since the beginning of time.” (CBS News, 10/1/15)

“The great majority of refugees need to be safely kept in Syria... I do think we have a responsibility to help with refugees after proper screening. And I think our focus ought to be on the Christians who have no place in Syria anymore.” (Meet the Press, 11/15/15)

“If we’ve screened refugees, if you’re a Christian Syrian who but for the good fortune of escaping and crossing through ISIS territory, and crossing the Turkish border, stuck in a refugee camp, and go through the process to prove you’re not an Islamic terrorist, you come to the United States, this noble country, to send them back to their slaughter? I find it appalling.” (Michael Medved Show, 11/20/15)

On Trump’s proposal to ban all Muslims from entering the country, “Look, this is not a serious proposal. In fact, it will push the Muslim world, the Arab world away from us at a time when we need to reengage with them to be able to create a strategy to destroy ISIS.” (CNN GOP Debate, 12/16/15)
Bush on whether a Muslim can be President, “I don’t think religion should be a criteria for being president.”
(Huffington Post, 9/22/15)

Ben Carson 💔

“I think we are fighting radical Islam. There is no question about it. They have the same goal as they did when Mohammed was around. They want to dominate. And they want everyone else to submit to them. [They] don’t believe in live and let live like we do.” (Fox News, 05/11/15)

When asked how he would like to see the U.S. government respond to the Syrian refugee crisis, Carson said, “I would recognize that bringing in people from the Middle East right now carries extra danger. I know we have a process, but how effective is it? How does it, you know, let people like the Tsarnaev brothers in here... We cannot put our people at risk because we’re trying to be politically correct.” (ABC News, 05/11/15)

When asked if he believes Islam is consistent with the constitution, he replied, “No, I don’t, I do not...I would not advocate that we put a Muslim in charge of this nation. I absolutely would not agree with that.” (NBC News, 9/20/15)

“If someone has a Muslim background and they’re wiling to reject those tenets and accept the way of life that we have and clearly will swear to place our constitution above their religion, then of course they’ll be considered infidels and heretic, but at least then I’d be quite willing to support them....What we have to recognize is that this is America, and we have a constitution and we don’t put people at the leadership of our country whose faith will interfere with the carrying out the duties of the constitution. If you believe in a theocracy, I don’t care if you’re a Christian. If you’re a Christian and you’re running for president and you want to make us into a theocracy, I’m not going to support you.” (Fox News, 9/22/15)

“To bring into this country groups infiltrated with jihadists makes no sense... At some point you have to use common sense and judgment. If you are part of the global jihadist movement, and you see large numbers of people from your area moving into the United States, wouldn’t you want to infiltrate them?” (The Hill, 10/2/15)

“While many of us were troubled by the President’s decision at the time, given the events in Paris Friday night, there can be no disputing the fact that the United States cannot, should not, and must not accept any Syrian refugees, let alone the dramatically larger number President Obama volunteered to host.” (ABC News, 11/16/15)

“We must balance safety against just being a humanitarian. For instance, if there’s a rabid dog running around in your neighborhood, you’re probably not going to assume something good about that dog. And you’re probably going to put your children out of the way.” (CBS News, 11/19/15)

“I do not believe Sharia is consistent with the Constitution of this country,” he told The Hill. “Muslims feel their religion is very much a part of your public life and what you do as a public official, and that’s inconsistent with our principles and our Constitution.” (The Hill, 9/20/15)

Governor of New Jersey Chris Christie 🙌🍴

In response to Donald Trump’s comments on a supporter’s bigoted question, Christie commented, “I would correct them. I would say the President is a Christian and he was born in this country. Those two things are self evident.... I wouldn’t have permitted it. If somebody at a town hall meeting of mine I would have said, ‘No, listen. Before we answer, let’s clear things up for the rest of the audience.’ And I think you have an obligation as a leader to do that.” (CNN, 09/19/15)
“The fact is that we need for appropriate vetting, and I don’t think that orphans under 5 should be admitted to the United States at this point. We need to put the safety and security of the American people first.” (ABC News, 11/16/15)

“I urge you to halt your plans to accept more Syrian refugees in the United States. I have no doubt that ISIS will try to exploit American humanitarianism to expose Americans to similar deadly risk.” (ABC News, 11/17/15)

In response to Donald Trump’s claim that Muslims in New Jersey were cheering after the World Trade Center fell on 9/11, Christie said, “I said I didn’t remember it, that was the way I put it that day. That wasn’t me trying to hedge anything, it was me telling the truth. I don’t remember it happening, and if it had happened, I’m pretty sure I’d remember it… The fact is people can say anything, but the facts are the facts and that didn’t happen in New Jersey that day and it didn’t happen since.” (ABC News, 11/30/15)

“[After 9/11] I went to mosques all around New Jersey and I met with the people in those mosques so they could see me and I could see them. And what you realize over the course of time is they’re Americans, too, and they love this country and they care deeply about its future and their children’s future. And you can’t – and this is just common sense, everybody – you can’t paint everybody with the same brush.” (Huffington Post, 12/14/15)

**Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton**

“Donald Trump not denouncing false statements about POTUS & hateful rhetoric about Muslims is disturbing, & just plain wrong. Cut it out. -H” (Twitter.com/HillaryClinton, 09/17/15)

“We should take-- increased numbers of refugees. The administration originally said ten [thousand]. I said we should go to 65 [thousand] but only if we have as carefully screening and vetting process as we can imagine whatever resources it takes. Because I do not want us to-- in any way-- inadvertently allow people who wish us harm to come into our country.” (CBS News, 11/14/15)

“And now you know with this new refugee crisis of course we have to have a lot of vigilance and we have to vet people and I would depend upon our defense and intelligence professionals to guide us in doing that. But we can’t act as though we’re shutting the doors to people in need without undermining who we are as Americans and the values we have stood for.” (ABC News, 11/17/15)

“We’ve seen a lot of hateful rhetoric from the GOP. But the idea that we’d turn away refugees because of religion is a new low. -H” (Twitter.com/HillaryClinton, 11/17/15)

“The obsession in some quarters with a clash of civilizations or repeating the specific words ‘radical Islamic terrorism’ isn’t just a distraction. It gives these criminals, these murderers, more standing than they deserve. It actually plays into their hands by alienating partners we need by our side.” (Council on Foreign Relations, 11/19/15)

“Declaring war on Islam or demonizing Muslim Americans is not only counter to our values—it plays right into the hands of terrorists.” (Twitter.com/HillaryClinton, 12/07/15)

“To Muslim Americans: What you’re hearing from Trump and other Republicans is absolutely, unequivocally wrong. It’s inconsistent with our values as a nation—a nation which you are helping to build. This is your country too. I’m proud to be your fellow American. And many, many other Americans feel the same way.” (Hillaryclinton.com, 12/8/15)
U.S. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)

In response to the murder of four Marines in Chattanooga, TN, Cruz stated, “In the wake of this vicious attack on our nation we need to rid ourselves of two dangerous delusions, first and foremost that a ‘lone gunman’—as President Obama described the shooter—is somehow isolated from the larger threat of radical Islamic terrorism. In the modern world, no one acts in isolation. Through social media ISIS, al Qaida, and other groups are infiltrating our nation with impunity while our government will not even admit that radical Islamic terrorism is a problem.” (TedCruz.org, 07/17/15)

“Right now, Barack Obama is proposing to bring in tens of thousands of Syrian Muslim refugees. That is, in a word, lunacy. This refugee crisis is a humanitarian crisis, but it is a crisis of President Obama’s own creation.” Cruz then incorrectly said that 77% of refugees in Europe are young men, claiming “now that is an unusual demographic for a refugee crisis. The director of national intelligence has said that among those refugees coming into Europe are no doubt ISIS terrorists. Now it makes no sense whatsoever to bring in ISIS terrorists coming to wage jihad and murder innocent Americans.” (ThinkProgress, 10/16/15)

“We need to immediately declare a halt to any plans to bring refugees that may have been infiltrated by ISIS to the United States. We need to redouble our efforts to prevent ISIS agents from penetrating our nation by other means...We must immediately recognize that our enemy is not ‘violent extremism.’ It is the radical Islamism that has declared jihad against the West.” (TedCruz.org, 11/14/15)

“We know, for example, that the wife of one of the jihadists in San Bernardino came on a so-called fiancé visa. Well, the vetting that the administration did to her is the exact same vetting they are proposing to do for these Syrian Muslim refugees. And the vetting didn’t catch obvious errors. Like, she had on her application a made-up address. But, apparently they didn’t catch that. And yet, this president is telling us we can bring tens of thousands of refugees from Syria, when we know ISIS wants to infiltrate those refugees and carry out acts of jihad here at home...it’s this political correctness that prevents them from being serious about keeping the American people safe, and the world’s too dangerous for that.” (Fox News, 12/5/15)

“I do not agree with [Trump’s] proposal [to ban all Muslims from entering the U.S.]. I do not think it is the right solution...I like Donald Trump. I commend Donald Trump for standing up and focusing America’s attention on the need to secure our borders.” (Politico, 12/08/15)

Carly Fiorina

When asked about her opinion about Ben Carson’s comment that he would not support a Muslim being president, Fiorina said, “Well, I think that’s wrong. It says in our Constitution that religion cannot be a test for office. It’s also true that this country is founded on the principle that we judge each individual, and that anyone of any faith is welcome here.” (09/22/15, NBC News)

“Donald Trump always plays on everyone’s worst instincts and fears, and saying we’re not going to let a single Muslim into this country is a dangerous overreaction.” (NBC News, 12/7/15)
“Donald Trump for example has been saying we’re going to use a religious test and ban people from coming into this country…It’s a violation of our Constitution, but it also undermines the character of our nation. We stand for religious liberty.” (The Des Moines Register, 12/8/15)

**U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC)**

In response to a suggestion to outlaw Islam in the United States, Graham replied, “You know what, I’m not your candidate. I don’t want you to vote for me. I couldn’t disagree with you more. I’m not putting up with that. He’s got a right to say whatever he wants to say, but I have an obligation to the Republican Party, to the people of Iowa and the country as a whole to be firm on this. I’m not buying into that construct. That’s not the America that I want to lead.” (CBS, 07/03/15)

“I have a problem with any person running for president who would apply a religious test to any religious group inside of America. Mr. Carson is a fine man but the Constitution is clear here. The one thing I would tell Dr. Carson, Mr. Trump and everyone else, is that if you want to destroy radical Islam, you have to work with people in the faith. The good news for us is that the overwhelming majority of Muslims throughout the world are not buying what ISIL is selling.” (Fox News, 09/22/15)

“The one thing I’ve learned from Paris is that we need to have a timeout on bringing refugees into this country until we have a system that we think will work. So I’m calling for a timeout on Syrian refugees.” (Fox News Radio, 11/16/15)

“I don’t think we should be promoting Judeo-Christian values in the Arab world. I think that was the Crusades.” (Real Clear Politics, 11/18/15)

“@RealDonaldTrump has gone from making absurd comments to being downright dangerous with his bombastic rhetoric… He’s putting at risk the lives of interpreters, American supporters, diplomats, & the troops in the region by making these bigoted comments… Every candidate for president needs to do the right thing & condemn @Realdonaldtrump’s statement.” (Twitter.com/LindseyGrahamSC, 12/07/15)

**Former Governor of Arkansas Mike Huckabee**

“Everything [President Obama] does is against what Christians stand for, and he’s against the Jews in Israel. The one group of people that can know they have his undying, unfailing support would be the Muslim community. It doesn’t matter whether it’s the radical Muslim community or the more moderate Muslim community.” (Fox and Friends, 02/09/15)

“Children in Islamic countries are raised to believe that strapping a bomb to their bodies to kill Jews is a holy mission that brings rewards in the afterlife. And the world asks Israel to give up the land God gave them so their sworn enemies can get closer to their children’s schools, playgrounds, and bedrooms?” (Washington Examiner, 02/13/15)

“It’s time to wake up and smell the falafel. Something isn’t going right in this open immigration policy. We are importing terrorism… I would not bring refugees into the United States.” (Fox News, 11/14/15)

“It seems to me the craziest thing we could do is take people who live in a desert who don’t speak our language, who don’t understand our culture, who don’t share a same worldview, and bring them to Minnesota during the winter.” (CNN, 11/14/15)

“We must immediately ban ALL visas for travelers and tourists from any country with a significant ISIS or al-Qaeda presence. Second, we must reject all Syrian refugees to America.” (TIME, 11/14/15)
“Obama’s new domestic terrorism plan probably requires Americans to memorize Koran verses... Bomb-throwing Baptists, Anglican arsonists, or radicalized Roman Catholics don’t commit these atrocities—radical Islamic jihadists do. Yet this administration is so naive, they refuse to speak the truth about Islamic terrorism.” (Fox News, 11/23/15)

“The attack that happened in San Bernardino was one more reminder that we are at war. Whether our president wants to acknowledge it or not… we are at war. They don’t want to just take some land…they want to kill us every last one of us. I hate to break it to you, but it’s over here. It’s going to get worse before it gets better unless we take this threat seriously. I’m committed to the notion that America has to take that threat of Islamic jihad so seriously that we see it as a malignant cancer. Take it out do whatever you got to do.” (Breitbart, 12/04/15)

Governor of Louisiana Bobby Jindal

“All departments, budget units, agencies, offices, entities, and officers of the executive branch of the State of Louisiana are authorized and directed to utilize all lawful means to prevent the resettlement of Syrian refugees in the State of Louisiana while this Order is in effect.” (Executive Order, State of Louisiana, 11/16/15)

Governor of Ohio John Kasich

“U.S. public diplomacy and international broadcasting have lost their focus on the case for Western values and ideals and effectively countering our opponents’ propaganda and disinformation. I will consolidate them into a new agency that has a clear mandate to promote the core, Judeo-Christian Western values that we and our friends and allies share: the values of human rights, the values of democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of association…. It’s essential by the way that those in the West begin to embrace again our Jewish-Christian tradition rather than running from it, hiding from it.” (NBC News, 11/17/15)

In his response to the Paris terrorist attacks, Kasich said, “There is no way that we can put any of our people at risk by bringing [Syrian refugees] in at this point... Should anybody come in here before the end of the year? The answer to that should be no. We should not jeopardize our people. And so it’s not just an issue of the heart. It’s also an issue of the head.” (Cincinnati Enquirer, 11/17/15)

“The idea that someone would have to register with the federal government because of their religion strikes against all that we believe in our nation’s history.” (Twitter.com/JohnKasich, 11/20/15)

Kasich on whether of not a Muslim can be President, “The answer is, at the end of the day, you’ve got to go through the rigors, and people will look at everything. But, for me, the most important thing about being president is you have leadership skills, you know what you’re doing and you can help fix this country and raise this country. Those are the qualifications that matter to me.” (Associated Press, 9/20/15)

“I flat out condemn the idea that we are going to have Muslims register...And the idea that we’re going to repel an entire group of people on the basis of their religion? It’s nonsense.” (Meet the Press, 11/22/15)

Former Governor of Maryland Martin O’Malley

“Shame on you, @realDonaldTrump. ‘Muslim’ is not a slur. You cannot scapegoat your way to the presidency. -O’M” (Twitter.com/MartinOMalley, 09/18/15)

“Unlike the hateful words you heard at the #GOPDebate, I would warmly welcome 65,000 Syrian refugees.” (Twitter.com/MartinOMalley, 09/18/15)
In response to Ben Carson’s belief that a Muslim can’t be president, O’Malley said, “I believe the vast majority of Americans don’t disqualify a candidate for President based upon his or her religious affiliation. I think that’s sad, bigoted language that’s a vestige of our past.” (MSNBC, 09/22/15)

At the Arab American Institute’s 2016 National Leadership Conference, O’Malley stated, “Ben Carson flat out said that he would not be comfortable with a president who happened to be Muslim, one wonders from a man who understands the value of education what sort of message that sends to Muslim American little boys and girls studying American history.” (MichiganJournal.org, 10/27/15)

At the Arab American Institute’s 2016 National Leadership Conference, O’Malley stated, “Think about this, for us as a nation of 320 million people, to be able to do our part and accept 65,000 refugees from Syria, moms and dads and little kids, is like a baseball stadium with 32,000 people making room for 6 and a half more. We are a large nation and we are not a shrinking nation. And we must do better in the face of this humanitarian crisis.” (AAIUSA.org, 10/27/15)

“Let’s not fall into the trap of thinking that all of our Muslim-American neighbors in this country are somehow our enemies here. They are our first line of defense. And we are going to be able to defeat ISIS on the ground there as well as in this world-- because of the Muslim-Americans in our country and throughout the world who understand that this brutal and barbaric group is perverting the name of a great world religion. And now like we never before-- we need our Muslim-American neighbors to stand up and to-- and to be a part of this.” (CBS News, 11/14/15)

“Scapegoating an entire religious community and rejecting those fleeing ISIL’s terrorism and persecution is what the terrorists want.” (CNN, 11/16/15)

“Republican Governors in 13 states have now called for the rejection of Syrian refugees fleeing the very same violence we saw in Paris. They are rejecting our values in the face of fear & ignorance. Keeping America safe and staying true to who we are is not a zero-sum choice.” (Facebook.com/MartinOMalley, 11/16/15)

U.S. Senator Rand Paul (R-KY)

When asked if he would be comfortable having a Muslim president, Paul said, “It’s not so much what religion you are, it’s what you stand for. But we are no where near probably that happening, they are such a small part of our population. The hard part is, although we are a very pluralistic society, we are open to all religions, more free than any other country, the problem is the people who have been attacking us have been all of one religion and it’s hard to separate that. So I understand people saying ‘oh my goodness, how can that happen’…. It’s hard for us, we were attacked by people who were all Muslim.” (CBS, 09/20/15)

“I wouldn’t invite the refugees in the first place.” (CNN, 11/14/15)

“We spend billions of dollars scooping up all the phone records of millions of Americans and sending them to Utah, to a multi-billion-dollar science-fiction sort of headquarters there, to house all these records, when in reality what we ought to do is maybe spend more time on people who speak Arabic, people who are looking at public avenues and public access to see who are the ones talking and might want to harm us.” (WHO News Radio, 12/04/15)

U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL)

“I don’t believe anyone should be disqualified from the presidency because of their denomination and because of their faith. Now, I personally also believe if someone believes in Sharia law they’re not going to get elected to anything, much less the presidency. That’s just a fact.” (Fox News, 09/22/15)

In response to Secretary Clinton not saying “radical Islam” during the second Democratic debate, Rubio said
that’s “like saying we weren’t at war with Nazis, because we were afraid to offend some Germans who may have been members of the Nazi Party but weren’t violent themselves... We are at war with radical Islam, with an interpretation of Islam by a significant number of people around the world who they believe now justifies them in killing those who don’t agree with their ideology. This is a clash of civilizations.” (ABC, 11/16/15)

“Radical Muslims and radical Islam is not just hate talk. It’s hate action. They blow people up. Look what they did in San Bernardino. Look at the attack they inspired in Philadelphia, that the White House still refuses to link to terror, where a guy basically shot a police officer three times.” (New York Times, 1/28/16)

“We won’t be able to take more refugees. It’s not that we aren’t compassionate. But we can’t. There’s no way to background check them.” (Marcorubio.com, 12/15/15)

“It’s not about closing down mosques. It’s about closing down any place — whether it’s a cafe, a diner, an internet site — any place where radicals are being inspired...The bigger problem we have is our inability to find out where these places are, because we’ve crippled our intelligence programs, both through unauthorized disclosures by a traitor, in Edward Snowden, or by some of the things this president has put in place with the support even of some from my own party to diminish our intelligence capabilities."So whatever facility is being used — it’s not just a mosque — any facility that’s being used to radicalize and inspire attacks against the United States, should be a place that we look at.” (The Hill, 11/20/15)

“Well, we’ve always been a country willing to accept people who have been displaced...I would be open to that if it can be done in a way that would allow us to ensure that among them are not infiltrated people who are part of a terrorist organization that are using this crisis. I think overwhelmingly, the vast and overwhelming majority of people who are seeking refuge are not terrorists, of course. But you always are concerned by that. But the bigger issue is some of these communities, especially Christians have a longstanding ancient tradition in that region. They would prefer to stay in that region. So I think the better outcome—obviously we have to provide for their short term needs, but long term we have to have a regional strategy that allows especially Christians to be able to go back to their ancient cities and their ancient population centers where they’ve been for almost 2,000 years up until recent events.” (Boston Herald Radio, 9/8/15)

**U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT)**

“The ridiculous arrest of Ahmed and awful comments at @realDonaldTrump’s rally show us we must stand strong against anti-Muslim bigotry.” (Twitter.com/SenSanders, 09/18/15)

“In terms of refugees I believe that the United States has the moral responsibility with Europe, with Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia to make sure that when people leave countries like Afghanistan and Syria with nothing more than the clothing on their back that of course we reach out. Now what the magic number is, I don’t know. Because we don’t know the extent of the problem. But I certainly think that the United States should take its full responsibility in helping those.” (CBS New, 11/14/15)

“During difficult times, we will not succumb to racism, we will not allow ourselves to be divided and succumb to Islamophobia. And when hundreds of thousands of people have lost everything ... we will not turn our backs on the refugees.” (ABC News, 11/16/15)

When asked about Trump claiming that thousands of Arab Americans were cheering in New Jersey when 9/11 happened, Sanders said, “I have not heard any evidence of this happening... What I get concerned about is this growth of Islamophobia in this country. This desire to win votes by scapegoating this group of people.” (The Hill, 11/23/15)

“Demagogues throughout our history have attempted to divide us based on race, gender, sexual orientation or country of origin. Now, Trump and others want us to hate all Muslims. The United States is a great nation when we stand together. We are a weak nation when we allow racism and xenophobia to divide us.” (Facebook.com/BernieSanders, 12/7/15)
Former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA)

When asked if the U.S. is “at war” with Islam, “The fact of the matter is that whether it’s ISIS or Islamic jihad or the wahabbists, who are all extremists in their ideology, it’s just how violent they are. But their ideology is all the same. And it is a very fundamentalist view of Islam that dates back to the time of the creation of Islam. These people are citing the Quran. To suggest that this is not a part of Islam, that Islam is not a contributing factor is really not honest, is not discussing what needs to be discussed. When the president says that this has nothing to do with Islam he gives the Islamic world a pass, and we can’t do that.” (World Over, 02/20/15)

Donald Trump

After being read names of known terrorists, Trump said, “Name after name—Arab name, Arab name, Arab name—and there are few people anywhere that would have known those names. I think he was reading them off the sheet.” (CNN, 09/16/15)

When asked if he would be comfortable with a Muslim being president, “It’s something at some point that could happen…we’ll see. It’s something that could happen. Would I be comfortable? I don’t know if I have to address it right now…some people say that it has already happened.” (NBC News, 09/20/15)

“Now I hear we want to take in 200,000 [Syrian refugees]. We don’t know where they’re coming from. We don’t know who they are. They could be ISIS. It could be the great Trojan Horse…And I’m saying we’re going to take in 200,000 people that we have no idea where they come from?” (ABC, 10/08/15)

Speaking about Muslim Syrian refugees, Trump said, “We have no idea, will they assimilate, will they be able to assimilate… do they even want to assimilate? If they come into this country, they’re going out. If I win, they’re going out. If you take thousands of people... all you need is a couple [to attack Americans]. (Sean Hannity Show, 11/18/15)

In response to the Paris terrorist attacks, Trump said, “Anybody that’s brought into this country from the migration is going to be out. We’re not going to do it. We’re going to have a country again, we’re going to have borders, we’re going to have a country again. Right now we don’t have a country.” (YouTube, NBC News, 11/19/15)

“There’s hatred and there’s hatred like nobody has ever seen, and it’s obviously emanating from and coming out of, among other places, the mosques... I think we ought to start [surveillance] up again, and we ought to start it up this morning. We ought to start it up again and get going. And use your head. This is a lot of nonsense that we ended.” (Siriux XM Breitbart News Daily, 11/19/15)

After being asked if there should be a database to track Muslims in this country, Trump responded, “There should be a lot of systems, beyond database systems and you can do it... I would certainly implement that. Absolutely.” (NBC News, 11/20/15)

“I don’t want to close mosques, I want to surveil mosques... Big material and good material from what I understand from a very good source was coming out of those mosques. We we learning a lot were stopping problems and potential problems by learning what was happening... I don’t want to close up mosques, but things have to happen where you have got to use strong measures or you’re going to see buildings coming down.” (ABC, 11/22/15)

“I want a database for the refugees if they come into this country. We have no idea who they are. When the Syrian refugees start pouring into this country, we don’t know if it’s ISIS, we don’t know if it’s a Trojan horse. And I definitely want a database and other checks and balances. We want to go with watch lists. We want to go with databases. And we have no choice. We don’t know who’s being sent in here... This could be the great Trojan horse of all time.” (ABC, 11/22/15)
“There were people that were cheering on the other side of New Jersey, where you have large Arab populations. They were cheering as the World Trade Center came down... I know it might be not politically correct for you to talk about it, but there were people cheering… as those buildings came down. And that tells you something.” (ABC, 11/22/15)

*After being asked if Islam is a peaceful or violent religion, Trump said, “There’s something definitely going on. I don’t know that that question be answered. It could be answered two ways. It could be answered both ways. You see the hatred. You see it every day.” (MSNBC, 11/30/15)*

“I think there can be profiling … [there is] something wrong with that group they saw what was happening, they didn’t want to call the police because they didn’t want to be profiling. I think that’s pretty bad. People are dead. Lot of people are dead right now. Everybody wants to be politically correct and that’s part of the problem that we have with our country.” (CBS News, 12/06/15)

“Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on. We have no choice… According to Pew Research, among others, there is a great hatred toward Americans by large segments of the Muslim population.” (New York Times, 12/07/15)

**U.S. SENATE**

**Sen. John McCain (R-AZ)** 👍

*In reaction to Donald Trump’s comment that no Muslims should enter the U.S., McCain said, “I think [Donald Trump’s statement] has an interesting effect of turning Muslims all over the world against the United States of America, which is 99.44 percent people who practice an honorable religion.”* (CBS News, 11/29/15)

**Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)** 👎

“Trump’s proposal to ban all Muslims from entering the U.S. is “completely and totally inconsistent with American values.” (Politico, 12/09/15)

**Sen. David Vitter (R-LA)** 🔴

“President Obama’s plan to bring 10,000 Syrian refugees to the U.S…. is outrageous and irresponsible.” (WGNO New Orleans, 11/15/15)

**HOUSE**

**House Speaker Paul Ryan (R, WI-6)** 👍

*In reaction to Donald Trump’s comment that no Muslims should enter the U.S., Ryan said, “This is not conservatism. What was proposed yesterday is not what this party stands for.”* (NBC News, 12/08/15)


“European media sources confirm that ISIS has already infiltrated some refugee communities. President Obama’s own FBI, DHS and DNI directors admitted that we cannot properly vet Syrian refugees for national security risks. Rather than giving the Administration a blank check that puts the safety and security of the American people at risk, Congress should stand up and use the budget process to stop this dangerous and costly program.” (Breitbart, 11/16/15)
Rep. Donald Beyer (D, VA-8); Rep. Keith Ellison (D, MN-5); Rep. Joseph Crowley (D, NY-14)

“We must show that we will not tolerate Islamophobia and that those who propagate it do not represent the melting-pot America that we celebrate.” (Beyer.house.gov, 12/2/15)

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D, OR-3)

“If France had passed a similar bill and closed their doors to all Syrian refugees, it would not have prevented the disgusting individuals who carried out those attacks from entering the country because not a single one of them was a refugee.” (Blumenauer.house.gov, 11/19/15)

Rep. Mo Brooks (R, AL-5)

“We’re paying them about $15,000 a year in free health care, free food, free shelter, free clothing, free transportation. That answers very quickly why so many of them want to come to the United States of America. We’re paying them to come here. It’s a paid vacation!” (Dale Jackson Show, 11/20/15)

Rep. Andre Carson (D, IN-7)

“I think what’s taking place is a deep kind of bigotry that is evolving and hardening into the political landscape. Our previous governor, Gov. Mitch Daniels, is of Syrian descent; he was one of Bush’s few Arab advisers. And so, my hope being is that, folks like you, who are using you platform phenomenally well, continue to use similar things to spread the word.” (Sirius XM News & Issues, 12/01/15)

Rep. Debbie Dingell (D, MI-12)

“When addressing those that promote anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bigotry Rep. Dingell said, “Stop. Enough is enough. It is not who we are as Americans.” (Lawrence.house.gov, 12/23/15)

Rep. Jeff Duncan (R, SC-3)

“How’s that Syrian refugee resettlement look now? How about that mass migration into Europe? Terrorism is alive & well in the world. #No” (Twitter.com/RepJeffDuncan, 11/13/15)

Rep. Joe Kennedy (D, MA-4)

“The threat that we’re facing is one of extremists and not any one nationality or ethnicity.” (WFXT Fox Boston, 12/06/15)

Rep. Steve King (R, IA-4)

“Can you identify for me a suicidal terrorist that was not a Muslim?” (Congressional Hearing, 11/19/15)

“One service we know [Trump’s] provided is he’s opened up the topic so that we can have a legitimate discussion. I’m glad for that. I thank him for doing that.” (Politico, 12/09/15)

Rep. Peter King (R, NY-2)

“We have to have more surveillance in the Muslim community…The reality is that’s where the terrorism is coming from. Doesn’t mean that all Muslims are evil, doesn’t mean all Muslims support terrorism, the overwhelming majority do not. But the reality is that’s where the threat is coming from.” (The Hill, 11/15/15)
Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D, MI-14)

“History has taught us that the biggest threat to our democracy is silence...Collectively, if we raise our voices and not be silent, we can make a difference...we can show those who are misinformed that hatred will not be tolerated; not in this country, not in southeast Michigan.” (Lawrence.house.gov, 12/23/15)

Rep. Stephen Lynch (D, MA-8)

“I think with the millions and millions of Syrian refugees that are trying to escape that war-torn country, I think certainly, we could vet 10,000 that we think are safe bets.” (Masslive.com, 11/16/15)

Rep. Scott Perry (R, PA-4)

“With all due respect, if there’s a civil war in my country, I stay and fight for my country. There is absolutely no reason they need to be coming to America.” (WBAL Radio, 11/19/15)

Rep. Jackie Speier (D, CA-14)

“The one thing we know about ISIS is we have underestimated them at every step along the way, so to think that they’re not sophisticated enough to get a ‘clean’ Syrian to come over is being naive, I think.” (LA Times, 11/19/15)

Rep. Greg Walden (R, OR-2)

“Our nation has a strong tradition of welcoming people who are seeking a better life, we cannot allow terrorists to take advantage of our compassion.” (Twitter.com/RepGregWalden, 11/18/15)

“It would be reckless and dangerous to bring in more Syrian refugees to this country until the government can ensure that none among them poses a security threat to the American people and our way of life.” (Facebook.com/RepGregWalden, 11/18/15)

GOVERNORS

Gov. Greg Abbott (R-TX)

“As governor of Texas, I write to inform you that the State of Texas will not accept any refugees from Syria in the wake of the deadly terrorist attack in Paris. Further, I - and millions of Americans - implore you to halt your plans to accept more Syrian refugees in the United States. A Syrian “refugee” appears to have been part of the Paris terror attack. American humanitarian compassion could be exploited to expose Americans to similar deadly danger. The reasons for such concerns are plentiful.” (gov.texas.gov, 11/16/15)

Gov. Robert Bentley (R-AL)

“I will not stand complicit to a policy that places the citizens of Alabama in harm’s way. We refuse Syrian refugees.” (Twitter.com/GovernorBentley, 11/15/15)

“After full consideration of this weekend’s attacks of terror on innocent citizens in Paris, I will oppose any attempt to relocate Syrian refugees to Alabama through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.” (governor.alabama.gov, 11/15/15)
Gov. Kate Brown (D-OR)

“Clearly, Oregon will continue to accept refugees. They seek safe haven and we will continue to open the doors of opportunity to them. The words on the Statue of Liberty apply in Oregon just as they do in every other state.” (Twitter.com/OregonGovBrown, 11/16/15)

Gov. Phil Bryant (R-MS)

“I will do everything humanly possible to stop any plans from the Obama administration to put Syrian refugees in Mississippi. The policy of bringing these individuals into the country is not only misguided, it is extremely dangerous. I’ll be notifying President Obama of my decision today to resist this potential action.” (Facebook.com/Im4Phil, 11/16/15)

Gov. Nathan Deal (R-GA)

“In light of the terror attacks in Paris, I’ve issued an executive order directing state agency heads to prevent the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Georgia. Further, I call upon the Obama administration to work with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security to confirm the backgrounds of the 59 Syrian refugees recently resettled to ensure they do not pose a security threat to our citizens. Until the federal government and Congress conducts a thorough review of current screening procedures and background checks, we will take every measure available to us at the state level to ensure the safety of Georgians.” (Executive Order, State of Georgia, 11/16/15)

Gov. Asa Hutchinson (R-AK)

“As governor, I oppose any facility or installation in Arkansas being used as a Syrian refugee center.” (Governor.arkansas.gov, 11/16/15)

Gov. Jack Markell (D-DE)

“It is unfortunate that anyone would use the tragic events in Paris to send a message that we do not understand the plight of these refugees, ignoring the fact that the people we are talking about are fleeing the perpetrators of terror.” (CNN, 11/18/15)

Gov. Tom Wolf (D-PA)

“As governor of Pennsylvania, my first priority is protecting the commonwealth. I believe we can keep Pennsylvania safe while also ensuring that Pennsylvania stays true to its values and builds on its rich history of accepting immigrants and refugees from around the world. These two goals are not mutually exclusive.” (WTAE.com, 11/16/15)

STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS

Mayor David Bowers (D-Roanoke, VA)

“I’m reminded that President Franklin D. Roosevelt felt compelled to sequester Japanese foreign nationals after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and it appears that the threat of harm to America from Isis now is just as real and serious as that from our enemies then.” (roanoke.com, 11/18/15)