

# The Islamophobia Movement in America

## Reference Guide

### Pamela Geller

Executive director of American Freedom Defense Initiative, co-founded Stop Islamization of America (SIOA) with Robert Spencer, Founder and Publisher of AtlasShrugs.com

**Summary:** After rising to national prominence during the 2010 controversy surrounding the Park51 Islamic Center, also known as the “Ground Zero Mosque,” Geller has since become one of the most recognizable and flamboyant mouthpieces for the movement. The American Freedom Defense Initiative have purchased a series of controversial transit ads, including the parody of the ‘#MyJihad’ campaign in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and seek to do so in other metropolitan areas.

**Quote:** “The media is aligned with the jihad force; the media self-enforces the Sharia; they refuse to criticize or offend or insult Islam that is in accordance with the blasphemy laws under the Sharia.”

### Brigitte Gabriel

Co-founder and president of ACT! for America, based in Pensacola, Fla.

**Summary:** Gabriel is a sought-after spokesperson who has authored two books that claim “radical Islam” is rooting in the United States. Her organization boasts 630 U.S. chapters and 12 international chapters. They say ‘violent jihad’ and ‘stealth cultural jihad’ will both result in “the advance and imposition of Islamic Sharia law throughout the world.” Guy Rodgers serves as ACT!’s Executive Director and was the former national field director for the Christian Coalition.

**Quote:** “The difference, my friends, between Israel and the Arabic world is quite simply the difference between civilization and barbarism. It’s the difference between good and evil and this is what we’re witnessing in the Arab and Islamic world. I am angry. They have no soul! They are dead set on killing and destruction.”

### David Yerushalmi

Founder of the Society of Americans for National Existence (SANE), co-founder and senior counsel to the American Freedom Law Center, senior counsel to the Frank Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy

**Summary:** Playing a role similar to Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach as the architect of state-level anti-immigrant laws like Arizona’s SB 1070, Yerushalmi is the originator of “American Laws for American Courts” legislation, which serve as a model for more than 60 anti-Sharia bills and amendments in state legislatures, including Tennessee and Florida. He has said that personal adherence to Islam should be punishable by prison sentences and has called for the deportation of all non-citizen Muslims. He is the legal counsel for the Center for Security Policy and has also represented Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer in legal actions against municipal transit organizations and defamation cases.

**Quote:** “If this thing passed in every state without any friction, it would not have served its purpose. The purpose was heuristic — to get people asking this question, ‘What is Sharia?’”

### Frank Gaffney

Founder of the Center for Security Policy

**Summary:** Gaffney is the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense under Ronald Reagan. His Center for Security Policy is a national think tank responsible for fear-mongering campaigns such as the “Sharia Awareness Project;” a ten-part video series titled “The Muslim Brotherhood in America;” and the Secure Freedom Radio program, which Gaffney hosts. David Yerushalmi serves as general counsel to Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy and serves as one of the co-authors of the Center’s “Shariah: The Threat to America” publication.

**Quote:** “I don’t believe there is such a thing as a moderate Islamist party. The challenge with Islamists is that they seek to impose what they call Sharia on everybody, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.”

### Steven Emerson

The Investigative Project on Terrorism

**Summary:** Emerson founded non-profit research organization the Investigative Project on Terrorism in 1995 to study the perceived threat of radical Islam. His research is loaded with anti-Muslim bias, yet is still utilized, and even praised, by some government officials and political organizations. Emerson’s work is very well-regarded and often cited among Islamophobia leadership.

**Quote:** “If I had to guess, based on what I know, based on my experience and this is all anecdotal, I would say to you at least thirty to forty percent [of Muslims] support cultural jihad. That is, at least, they support the notion that it’s ok to blow up a bus of Israelis, it’s ok to bomb the World Trade Center, it’s ok to impose the Sharia, the code of Islamic law, it’s ok to beat women or wives, as part of the Sharia.”

### David Horowitz

Founded David Horowitz Freedom Center

**Summary:** Horowitz’s Center is a conservative foundation that funds and publishes on various platforms for far-right ideologues, including Front Page Magazine and Jihad Watch. He also urges college campus-based organizations to push anti-Muslim views and hold events like “Islamofascism Awareness Week.”

**Quote:** “What has the Arab world contributed except terror?... The theocratic, repressive Arabic states do no significant science, no significant arts and culture.”

### Robert Spencer

Director of Jihad Watch; co-founded American Freedom Defense Initiative and Stop Islamization of America (SIOA) with Pamela Geller

**Summary:** Described by Frank Gaffney as “the acclaimed scholar of Islam,” Spencer is the director of the David Horowitz Freedom Center’s Jihad Watch program. Despite his lack of formal training in Islam or the Qur’an, Spencer has written numerous books on Islam and his writings are often cited by other leaders within the Islamophobia movement.

**Quote:** “I have written on numerous occasions that there is no distinction in the American Muslim community between peaceful Muslims and jihadists. While Americans prefer to imagine that the vast majority of American Muslims are civic-minded patriots who accept wholeheartedly the parameters of American pluralism, this proposition has actually never been proven.”

# Hotbeds of Hate

**Tennessee** has long been the center of anti-Sharia efforts and contentious debates over mosque construction. Bill French (aka Bill Warner), of the for-profit Center for the Study of Political Islam led a small, vocal, and lengthy opposition to the opening of a Murfreesboro mosque. State Sen. Bill Ketron, who represents Murfreesboro, once introduced legislation that would have designated certain religious practices — including foot washing and dietary restrictions — treasonous. The state is also home to 14 ACT! for America chapters.

**Florida** has been the site of anti-Muslim threats and violence, including a 2010 mosque bombing in Jacksonville. State lawmakers have repeatedly attempted to pass anti-Sharia legislation. Florida is home to Pastor Terry Jones, who staged Qur'an burning events at his church; Tom Trento, founder of the United West, and former congressman Allen West. West has said that Islam is a "very vile and very vicious enemy that we have allowed to come in this country because we ride around with bumper stickers that say 'co-exist.'" The national headquarters for ACT! for America is in Pensacola; statewide, the organization claims 16 chapters and 19,000 members. The grassroots coalition, combined with several prominent figureheads, has made the state an ideal space for anti-Muslim rhetoric and legislation. It is also home to Security Solutions International, LLC, a private firm which specializes in providing law enforcement training which demonizes Muslims.

**Southern California** has a strong anti-Muslim grassroots presence, with 16 ACT! for America chapters. Activists and local lawmakers have fought the construction of at least three new or reconfigured Islamic centers in the region since 2010. Southern California was the site of a 2011 demonstration in Yorba Linda where more than 100 protesters shouted "Go back home!" and "No Sharia law!" as Muslim individuals and families with children walked into a fundraiser for ICNA. Southern California is also home to the David Horowitz Freedom Center and hosts events and summits featuring stridently anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim speakers.

**New York** is home to the 2010 controversy over the Park51 Islamic center. Since then, anti-Muslim activity has not abated. Pamela Geller has continuously run inflammatory anti-Muslim advertisements across the New York City transit system. Since 2001, the New York Police Department targeted Muslims throughout the Northeastern region of the country in an extensive spying program, which sowed fear and mistrust among Muslims. U.S. Rep. Peter King held a series of controversial hearings on Capitol Hill about the perceived radicalization of Muslims. King is from Long Island where vandals have repeatedly attacked mosques and where construction of new Islamic centers has hit roadblocks. The International Counter-Terrorism Officers Association (ICTOA), which provides platforms to various anti-Muslim speakers to law enforcement, was founded by former personnel of the NYPD.

## Federal, State, and Local Islamophobia Activity

### "Counterterrorism" and Law Enforcement – *Train intelligence and law enforcement officials on the threat Islam poses to the US*

Former FBI agent John Guandolo; The Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies (Walid Phares, Clare Lopez, Stephen Coughlin, Tawfik Hamid, and Nonie Darwish), International Counter-Terrorism Officers Association (Walid Shoebat, Sam Kharoba, and Mark Gabriel), Security Solutions International (David Gaubatz, Dr. Ebrahim Ashabi, and Brooke Goldstein)

### Rigid Foreign Policy – *Discourage dialogue on Israel/Palestine Conflate Israeli criticism with support of terrorism*

David Yerushalmi, Frank Gaffney, Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer, David Horowitz, Steven Emerson, Brigitte Gabriel, Daniel Pipes (Middle East Forum) and Rabbi Raphael Shore (head of Aish HaTorah's U.S. Branch)

### Anti-Muslim Rhetoric – *"Terror Babies", the Muslim Brotherhood, and other paranoia*

Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX), Rep. Peter King (R-NY), Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN)

#### Federal Level Islamophobia Activity

### State Activity

#### Anti-Sharia – *"American Laws for America Courts"*

David Yerushalmi, at least 60 proposed state measures; passed in at least six states as of April 2013. Brigitte Gabriel conducts anti-Sharia conferences across the country to garner support for ALAC and other state and local measures.

#### Challenging Mosques, Challenging Worship – *Subversion of RLUIPA (Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act)*

ACT! for America (chapters), use zoning and traffic ordinances to oppose the construction of new mosques; Geller has called for the repeal of RLUIPA so it cannot be used to uphold mosque-construction permits. Mosque opponents in Murfreesboro, Tenn., brought in Gaffney to testify against the new construction.

#### Bigotry on Buses – *Purchasing nativist ads*

American Freedom Defense Initiative, Geller and Spencer, ads initially ran in New York City; appeared in Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington D.C.

#### Municipal and Local Activity

This guide uses the term Islamophobia to describe hate activity targeting Muslim, Arab American, and South Asian communities, as well as others perceived as Muslim foreigners. The Center for New Community defines this type of activity as nativist in nature.