

Justice for ALL: The Aftermath of September 11th



REPORT FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING

**September 21, 2002
Seattle, Washington**

**Organized by
Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington
with a Coalition of Community Organizations**

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Two months before the one-year anniversary of September 11, a group of individuals and community-based organizations representing diverse ethnic groups came together to plan an event that would adequately mark for them the tumultuous year since September 11, 2001. So was born the public hearing, **Justice for ALL: the Aftermath of September 11**. **Justice for ALL**, conceived and implemented by a coalition of almost one hundred immigrant, peace, civic and religious community groups, and modeled after the redress hearings held around the Japanese internment in the early 1980s. Men, women and children from the Sikh, Somali, Arab, Latino and Muslim communities came forward before a panel of high-level elected and appointed officials to tell their stories about the harassment, profiling and discrimination they have faced since September 11. Over 1,000 people attended this landmark hearing, the first such hearing to be held anywhere in the United States.

An NPR reporter speaking on air about **Justice for ALL** said that “In Seattle, over 1,000 people that we often take for granted in this country are showing us that democracy works.” We are proud of those who came forward to share their stories in spite of great fear. We also applaud the panel of Commissioners who received the testimony, understanding that they need to be held accountable for the dramatic impact of policies passed in the last year.

The following document is the report from that historic event, initiated by Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington and carried out by a unique coalition of local and national organizations. It holds the stories of all those who spoke and the responses of the Commissioners. Most of all, it holds the possibility of a democracy that truly supports **Justice for ALL**.



Pramila Jayapal
Executive Director
Hate Free Zone Campaign of WA

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Moderator

Washington State Supreme Court Justice Charles Z. Smith.

The Honorable Charles Z. Smith has served as a Justice of the Washington State Supreme Court since 1988. He holds a B.S. degree from Temple University (1952), a *Juris Doctor* degree from the UW School of Law (1955). He is a graduate of the National Judicial College, UN, Reno (1968), and a graduate of the Naval Justice School.

Commissioners

King County Council Member, Larry Gossett

Larry Gossett chairs the Law, Justice and Human Services Committees, and is Vice Chair of the Employment Committee for King County Council.

Asst. Attorney General for the State of Washington, David Horn

Dave Horn has served with the Washington State Attorney General's Office since 1986 and as Assistant Attorney General for Policy and Government Relations since 2000. In 2001 and 2002 Mr. Horn worked to produce a successful bill compelling school districts to ban all harassment and bullying of students.

U.S. Representative, Jay Inslee, 1st Congressional District

U.S. Rep. Jay Inslee represents Washington State's First District. Inslee is a Member of the Financial Services and Resources Committees. Inslee supported the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2001, and House Resolution 224.

Washington State Senator, Adam Kline, 37th Legislative District

Senator Adam Kline represents the state of Washington's 37th Legislative District. He is the Chair of the Judiciary Committee, and serves on the State and Local Government and Ways and Means Committees. He specializes in personal injury and civil rights law.

Seattle City Council Member, Nick Licata

Nick Licata has been a Seattle City Councilmember since 1998., and currently Chairs the Neighborhoods, Arts and Civil Rights Committee. He was a founding board member of the Capitol Hill Housing Improvement Program (CHHIP), and Director at WashPIRG.

U.S. Representative, Jim McDermott, 7th District

U.S. Congressman Jim McDermott represents the 7th District, which includes the people who live in Vashon, most of Seattle, some parts of Shoreline, SeaTac, and Burien. He works to assure the common good, and that government policies are developed and applied fairly.

Assistant U.S. Attorney, Bruce Miyake

Bruce Miyake, a third generation Japanese-American, has served as Assistant US Attorney since 1995. He is currently Hate Crimes Coordinator for Project Safe Neighborhoods, and is assigned to the Terrorism and Violent Crimes Unit.

Assistant Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Seattle Division, Ronald A. Nesbitt

Assistant Special Agent in Charge Ronald Nesbitt serves the FBI in various capacities. He is program manager for organized crime investigations and drug crimes, handles counter-terrorism and is involved with the National Foreign Intelligence Program.

Lead Counsel, Immigration & Naturalization Service, Dorothy Stefan

Dorothy Stefan has been Lead District Counsel in Seattle since 2001. She has served as trial attorney with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in Houston and as INS District Counsel in Anchorage.

General Introduction

Pramila Jayapal, Executive Director, Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington

Good morning and welcome. My name is Pramila Jayapal and I am the Executive Director of The Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington.

Ten days ago, the United States marked the first anniversary of the horrific events of September 11, 2001.

On that day, we lost thousands of men, women and children. We have mourned deeply as individuals for the husbands, wives, children, friends and partners who died on that day. We have derived strength from the actions of so many who came together to support those who suffered direct and indirect losses. We have also mourned deeply as a nation, for the loss of our sense of invulnerability – the idea that America was protected against this kind of terrible violence.

There is also another loss to mourn, one that has happened less publicly but no less profoundly. Since September 11, some of the cherished principles and values on which America is founded have been eroded or disregarded. This is a cause for great concern and is the reason we are gathered here today.

The loss of these principles has come at tremendous cost to our families and communities. The people that you will hear from today are those who celebrate America and what it means to live in America or be an American. They have mourned, given blood, lit candles and prayed for those who have died and those who remain. And yet, their lives have been shaken not just once, by the violent attacks of September 11, but twice, by the attacks that they personally have experienced in the past year. Sadly, many of these attacks come not only from other individuals but from the United States government that is charged with the great responsibility of protecting not just some, but all, of its people.

All of us here believe we must start from the premise that the United States government has the right and the obligation to protect its people from indiscriminate attacks. We recognize that the threat posed by al Qaeda and other allied groups is grave. We applaud many of the actions of the Government that have been driven by real need and common sense.

However, in the past year, it has also become increasingly clear that we must find a practical means to balance threats to civil liberties and civil rights with our efforts to ensure America's security. At stake now is nothing less than our definition of what America is and what it means to be American.

Over the last year the United States government has taken a series of actions that have gradually eroded basic human rights protections in the United States, fundamental guarantees that have been central to the U.S. constitutional system for more than 200 years. Viewed separately and when seen as an immediate response to the September 11 attacks, some of these actions by our government may not seem extreme. However, today, our communities as well as our courts are beginning to question and put reins on Government actions.

As we examine the composite picture of government actions, we are called to remember the core American and international human rights principles that guide our nation:

- **That America is a land of immigrants and that immigrants are "persons" under the Constitution, and are entitled to be treated fairly and with dignity.**
- **That there are three separate and independent branches of government – Executive, Judicial and Legislative – that check and balance each other to safeguard the freedoms and liberties of all people in the United States.**

- That the U.S. government is an open one in which decisions are made in the public square, and that as Federal Court Judge Damon J. Keith recently wrote, “Democracy dies behind closed doors.”
- That no one can be deprived of life, liberty or property without fundamental due process protections such as access to legal counsel and the right to a fair hearing before a judge.
- That people have the right of privacy from unwarranted government intrusion into their private lives and their homes.

As this country proceeds with its fight against terrorism, these rights must be brought back into balance. There are those who say that securing our country comes at a cost. As the American public, however, we say we are not willing to sacrifice those very principles of liberty, democracy and equality that define us as a great nation. That cost is far too high to pay.

We are here today to call attention to the impact on the lives of families and communities across Washington State who have not only been the victims of hate crimes by other individuals, but have also borne disproportionately the burden of the government’s new policies and practices that target and profile based on ethnicity and religion. These communities are living in terror, and it is a terror mirrored by similar communities across America. As you listen to these stories, we ask that you consider that for every person here testifying today, we found dozens more that were too afraid to come forward and testify for fear that they, too, would be targeted. We ask that you remember that for every story you hear today, there are dozens more that are equally and even more disturbing. And as you hear the testimonies, we ask that you consider these questions: Is this the America we believe in? What are we ultimately fighting for? And who and what are we willing to sacrifice in this fight?

We are holding this hearing because we believe that we must secure something much more fundamental than our borders, our cities, and our public places, and that is the cherished principles upon which our great country is founded. We are proud to be Americans and to live in America, and it is this pride that compels us to question our current path. President George W. Bush has said that “freedom and respect for human rights are owed to every human being, in every culture.” He has also rightly said that throughout history, freedom has been threatened by war and terror. Today, you will hear about some of the threats to our basic freedoms and basic rights.

To our Commissioners, we say this: We have asked you here because we are placing great faith in you. Thomas Paine has said that those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it. We urge you to let these words resound today and every day forward. On behalf of the over 50 organizations that have come together to host this event, I thank you sincerely for your presence and for the opportunity to allow our voices to be heard.

Hate Crimes & Discrimination

Introduction –Jasmit Singh Kochhar, Director of Education, Sikh Coalition

America has changed since that fateful day in September and so have our lives. We all shared the agony like any other American about what the terrorist had done to our country and its faith in respect for all. At the same time, all across the country, people were targeted based on their identity, faith, color, ethnicity or perceived association. In the weeks and months following September 11th, we opened our newspapers to horrible incidents of hate and violence:

- *A Pakistani grocer shot to death in Texas*
- *An elderly Sikh man beaten with a baseball bat in New York*
- *Two Muslim girls beaten at a college in Illinois*
- *A Mosque firebombed in Washington, DC*

Individuals from a variety of communities were assaulted—by none other than their fellow Americans. In the three months following September 11, the Council on American Islamic Relations registered over 1,400 hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims. In the same three-month period, the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium documented nearly 250 bias-motivated incidents targeting Asian Americans, particularly South Asians. The Sikh Coalition in the same three months received close to 200 confirmed cases of hate, bias or discrimination.

Four days after the September 11th attacks, a Sikh man by the name of Balbir Singh Sodhi was shot and killed while planting flowers outside of his neighborhood gas station in Mesa, AZ. As the suspect for Sodhi’s murder was being arrested, he said, “I stand for America all the way.” In a tragic postscript, Sodhi’s brother was shot in California almost nine months later. On the very same day of September 15th, Adel Kras, a Coptic Christian from Egypt, and Wassan Hassan Choudhary, a Muslim from Pakistan was shot to death. Many mosques, gurudwaras and other places identified with the communities were desecrated, vandalized or even burnt to the ground.

Within the first week after September 11, scores of the 40,000 Middle Eastern students from around the country left US universities because of fears of violent reprisals by Americans angry at the attacks on Washington and New York. At Washington State University, 44% of the Arab students left within the first week.

While the first wave of hate crimes appears to have subsided, there has been a continued and increasing anti-immigrant backlash sweeping the country, often showing its face in the form of employment and housing discrimination. According to the EEOC, about 650 charges have been filed by people who believe they were fired or harassed because of the backlash.

Lack of accurate information by some political leaders and news reporters resulted in causing greater damage to the communities. Some politicians contributed to the situation. For example, a Representative from Louisiana made it clear that if he saw “someone come in that’s got a diaper on his head and a fan belt wrapped around the diaper on his head, that guy needs to be pulled over.” His endorsement of racial profiling for those wearing turbans only propagates fear of things new and uncommon to the majority.

Many of our public officials have come out openly against hate crimes and discrimination. However, it is important to note that these statements were undercut by contradictory government actions that expressly target individuals based on religion or ethnicity, or ask people to report others simply because they appear “suspicious.” We ask all of our federal, state and local elected officials to consider that public

denouncements of hate activity must be supported by policies that ensure protection of civil liberties and rights.

They say if you want to see your future, see it in the eyes of a child. Unfortunately, as you will hear, children have not been spared from this mindless hate. Teasing is a part of growing up that almost all children go through in life. But imagine what it feels like to be called "Osama bin Laden" because of the turban you wear, to be constantly associated with terrorists, or to be socially isolated because of your religion or culture.

The essence of the American nation and the liberty of her citizens is the diversity of cultures, perspectives, and values. We ask you today to listen to the testimonies being presented by the community members with open hearts and minds. These are the pleas of men, women and children who have laid their faith in you as leaders of this country and ask of you to uphold the values that form the basis of this society and have been enshrined by the founding fathers in our Constitution.

Testimonies

Jasbir

I am a scientist by profession and have been teaching at Renton Gurdwara Sunday school since September of 1995. I have around seventy students in our school. Many of the children have come to me since September 11th talking about what they are facing at school.

Bullying happens everywhere; we all know that. But, ironically, it happens more at educational institutions. Bullying can leave permanent scars on everyone, especially children. It can cripple children's confidence. They feel neglected and left out. Somehow after September 11 the bullying incidents have increased against minorities and especially Sikhs. Simply because we wear turbans.

Sikhism is a separate religion from Hinduism and Islam. Hair is a very important part of our religion. Around two centuries back, Sikhs were tortured, killed, put alive in fire, placed in front of moving trains, yet they declined to remove or cut their hair. But bullying incidents with young Sikh students in schools and around have led to circumstances where many Sikh students feel insecure and they have removed their hair, just to be apart of the mainstream and not being able to bear the peer pressure. This is very upsetting for our community.

Bullying is a very sensitive issue for young students. Many times, children don't even want to discuss or talk such issues with their parents; maybe they are scared, humiliated, ashamed or feel inferior. They feel they are treated as second grade citizens. Generally students become introverted and avoid their peers who trouble them, and they get bullied more. If they resist or stand up then they are blamed. Students feel their parents would not understand them, so they try to hide bullying incidents from them. They start reacting by ignoring such incidents or by suffering in silence.

We had a meeting in our gurudwara to generally discuss the issue of bullying, then also, students were self conscious and hesitant to participate. After a lot of coaxing we received the first answer then a few more and finally it turned into a casual discussion forum. There were 60 children there and many of them had stories to tell.

Teachers should look around and observe in their classes for the signs of rejection/solace. Teachers, school administrators, students and parents should be educated about different minority cultures. For this purpose organizations like Hate Free Zone can play a catalyst role.

I would like to end with a statement commonly used by my daughter: sticks and stones can break your bones, but words can cut to the core. We need to repair the cut core instead of leaving it injured. These children, who are Sikh and Muslim, were asked the question, "What has happened to you since 9/11?"

Jaspreet, age 5

One day I am going to school, walking on my street and one guy said, "What is on your head?" I said, "This is my big hair and I want to keep my hair on my head." Then he was walking at me again and he said, "what you doing again, I can't hear you!" then he ride my bike. Then I said, "Stop!" but he never stopped and then I tell my teacher. Then he did it again and again and again and then he was suspended from my class.

There's a park near my home. Our bus comes there during summer to bring snacks for the kids. Some children from that bus fiddled with my hair. They said take a scissors and cut these off. I cried and I got scared. They told me I couldn't come on their bus. Now when the school started, I was scared and I asked my Mom, if students would bother me again in the school My Mom said no one should bother you, but if anyone does you come and tell us.

When people say things about your hair how does it make you feel?

Sad. I wish people would never talk about my hair. Never say bad words to anybody.

AD, Age 8

Our neighbor's wife and her sons were walking to Safeway, they had long hair. While they were walking and a car was coming and the people in the car threw balloons at them.

Gaganpreet, age 8

When I am playing at recess on the bars some people touch me and then go away and call me names about my hair and my scarf and sometimes they call me a baby and a stupid head. They sometimes call me baby head. I told my teacher that they were doing that to me. First I told my mom, then it was those half days of school and it was my meeting and my mother told my teacher. My teacher talked to me about what happened and I told her. And she told the class. She said that we should keep an eye on it and that's all.

How did it make you feel when they were calling you those names on the playground?

Bad.

What do you wish teachers would do about kids making fun of other kids?

Tell them to stop.

What would you say to other kids who are teasing?

Please stop doing that.

Gurpreet, age 8

My name is Gurpreet. I am 8 years old. There is this girl in my class in second grade and she kept on being boss of me and I tried to run away from her. I think she doesn't like me. She was like, "you have to eat that and you have to eat that", and I said "no I don't want to eat it and I don't have to". Then I said I want to go on the big toys and she said you have to go on the bars and I said I don't want to then she kept on pulling me and pushing me. She kept on following me but I told the recess teacher. The recess teacher had a talk but still she didn't stop so I told my teacher and then she had a little talk with them but still she didn't stop.

Then there was another girl who was that girl's friend and that girl told her friend to do that to me too and then I started to play with my sister and then every time they keep on spying on me and I didn't like that so I asked my teacher if I could help her during recess while they were playing. My teacher said sometimes I could but sometimes she said just go out to recess and have some fresh air but I didn't really want to do that because I knew they were going to spy on me. So I told my mom and my dad and they said just stay in but I said my teacher sometimes wouldn't let me. So I just had to play in a secret place

they never went into. I knew one place that they never liked to play so I went there and they never found out where I was. There is this tunnel thing at recess. Sometimes she only goes in the little one not the big one, so I just go in the big one and play around or sit and read in there. You can read there. So when I read I just ignore her and sometimes boys come into the tunnel and they call me names like you're mean and you're being boss and sometimes they will call me a stupid because they think you know, that my hair looks stupid and it looks like a pony. And then they begin to tease me and it happens the same as the other people. Like the girls. It's the same. They keep on teasing us and some other people sometimes and.... Sometimes they even like try to hit us.

What did it make you feel like?

Sad and kind of mad. I don't like it when people do that to other kids and to me.

What would you say to other kids who are doing that?

I would say can you stop? Or sometimes I might tell them that I will tell the principal and they might get scared so they won't do that again.

Khamar, age 8

There were these two boys and they said, "go back where you came from" and I really felt very sad. And the next day I was playing on the bars with a group of friends and one of them said that I could never be the president of the United States because I am a woman and I am Muslim. After September 11th they think that Somalians are terrorists. They're not!

Jugbir, age 8 1/2

I am in ***** elementary and I am 8 1/2 years old and a kid was bothering me. He said what are you wearing on your head and then I didn't talk to him because he was talking about my hair and then I said to him "stop it" and he wouldn't stop it and I went to the teacher and told her the kids name and I told my teacher that he was bothering me about my hairs and my teacher took him to the office and then she said if you do that next time he is going to be suspended.

How did that make you feel?

Sad. He said get rid of your hairs. And then I said, "I don't want to".

Jobanpreet, age 9

My name is Jobanpreet, my age is 10 years old, excuse me, um, 9 and this person called me a hamburger head and then I felt so mad and then I took three breaths and then I got calm. I didn't like it. I cried and I cried but I was still brave.

What does your hair mean for you?

It is our religion and because our Babaji, Guru Gobind Singhji told us not to cut your hair. Never cut your hair. It is important for us.

How did you feel when he called you a hamburger head?

Not so good, I was really mad

Did you tell anybody about it?

Yeah I told the teacher on the playground but they don't care. They don't care about my religion.

What happens when they don't care, how do you feel?

Not so good. Sad. (Starts to cry) really sad.

What would you like the schools to do to kids who are bullying other kids?

I would want them to have a rule to tell the principal. To have a rule don't bully and don't make fun of religions.

What would you say to other kids who are bullying?

Stop that please.

SJ, Age 12

My classmate called me Osama Bin Laden, and said my father is also Osama Bin Laden. I told him to stop calling me names but he didn't listen. I told to my teacher but no action was taken.

Parteek, age 14

I wanted to tell you that I have taken a lot of abuse in my life in America. Ever since I have come to America I haven't fought back to anybody. Sometimes even though I was one of the best basketball players in school I have been picked last and I haven't been able to play cause like kids wouldn't let me play.

In my one year at ***** elementary I had been punched, called names and beaten a lot. It got so bad that my Dad went and reported. Still I was still called names and hit. Then my Dad took his friend with him but still nothing changed. Once I stayed after school to play basketball, two boys came up and one boy had boxing gloves on. One boy took my basketball and he started punching me until the teacher came and gave me my basketball back and I was on the ground crying. I have been hit so many times. I don't even know why the point I came to America for.

Finally someone told my Dad to move to Redmond because it was a better neighborhood. In Redmond I was still called names and made fun of my hair but I don't want to cut my hair because I love my hair because it is a part of my religion.

So then my dad bought a house in Auburn and I thought things would get better because ever since I have come to America I have gone to a different school at the end of every school year. So I was tired of moving around and trying to make friends. When I moved to Auburn I thought it might go away 'cause nobody knew me here so I thought maybe I could be different. Here in Auburn I tried to fit in. Then September 11th happened and people started being mean to me again. Calling me Habib, towel head, pepper head. People called me Osama and Osama's son. And a lot of people did drugs so I was afraid that if I told anybody I might even get hurt bad.

It made me feel very bad when they called me diaper head because I love my hair, it is part of my religion and I never want to cut my hair. I don't know why they just don't like different people.

It hasn't gone away since September 11th and people still call me those names.

I wish kids who bully would just quit. Can't they see it hurts people? Even if they don't show it?

I know teachers know it goes on in school and they just ignore it.

Please don't ignore it.

[A slide containing this text was displayed during Parteek's testimony: *They didn't quit. And nobody listened. Parteek wanted to be here today to tell his story in person. But he can't. After six years of bullying, he lashed out. He was charged with 3rd degree assault. He is sitting in detention right now. He is 14.*]

Majid

I'm from Iraq. I have wife and two children. I come to U.S. as a refugee in 1995. In 1998 I moved to King County housing. My duplex neighbor and housing manager, they do not like us. The first time my neighbor she said you cannot stay here. The second time talked to me and my wife bad words because we are Muslim.

She laughing about my wife wearing the hijab. I complained, I go to the manager to ask her to help me. She refused to help me, and my neighbor she starts worse day after day she was talk to me and talk to my wife bad things. You are 'shit Muslim' like this stuff. She call my wife names, she call the police for no reason, police come and go away – she harass us many times. Three years she like this.

We got, you know, bad time. We don't leave house. We can't sleep bedroom. We sleep in living room because they kick the wall all the time. If you sleep, and, you know, my kids, they scared at night. Like, they fear, the fairy or something, in my house. Because the house shaking, you know, on the midnight or after 2 in the morning. When the children, they scared, not like us. We know about my neighbor. She kick the wall; but the kids, they don't know what's going on. They, this is miserable, you know. Hard to say, you know. And, I went to manager - head manager. I talked to him about the situation because we don't feel safety. We don't feel comfortable. We feel, my neighbor she's worse day after day because nobody give her notice. Nobody stop her or talk to her about us. And they don't help me...don't help my family. They force us, I thought, they force us to move from King County housing by myself, you know. And I thought that because nobody help me, nobody take care about me and my family, I think here are bad because we are Muslim. There have been that before when the family Muslim they lived before in my home, they have been like this, you know. Same my situation. And, nobody stop her, and I feel hopeless; I feel for the future, my family they don't like to stay to American no more because they don't feel comfortable, they feel Americans, they don't support that - to help us and to make us safety.

After 11 September, my neighbors got worse, worse. They stay outside. She want for us to hear us some bad words. She said to us we are terrorists, we are no good people. To leave United States. My wife she got sick for that, she scared. She can't sleep; we can't sleep nights because we feel unsafe. She want to go back to Iraq. Too many Arabic and Muslim people, they feel the same when I feel it because they feel unsafe in United States. The people they waiting, especially from Iraq, they waiting when Saddam Hussein he's done or moved from government, they will be back home. They feel more safety, more comfortable.

I talk to the manager. She don't take care. She said you are lying. I want they fire the manager. Because, not me...maybe too many people, they suffering. They suffering, you know.

Yasmeen Marie ¹

I was born over fifty years ago in Juanita and raised there as well. My family has been in the area now for about 120 years. For a long time this was a small community where we knew everyone and they knew us. I was gone from Juanita for about 12 years, returning in November of 2001. There has been a lot of growth in the area, but despite that many of the same old families live here. Apparently they are very different than my former perception of them as friends.

One afternoon I was shopping the Redmond Target with my mother. I was looking at vacuum cleaners and saw an older man carrying a dust buster. I smiled and asked him if a dust buster worked well. He looked at me as if I was a poisonous snake he wanted to kill and said, "Why don't you go home?" Genetics and years of teaching junior high have given me a quick wit in this kind of situation. So I said, "You mean back to Juanita?" He didn't see the humor in my response and stalked off. I found my mother in another part of the store and told her what happened. She shook her head and mumbled something about "nobody I know would say such hateful things." We went to the check out area and I saw the man a few lines from us. I pointed to him and said, "that is the man". She replied, "Why that'she was in the fire department with your father. Let's go talk with him." I restrained her and said let's not. I did not want to make a scene or to embarrass him. I just wanted to get away.

That was a rude awakening for me. I'm still the same person inside, but now I wear hijab. Because I am dressed modestly and cover my hair I am perceived as an object of hate. That particular incident stood out

¹ ¹ denotes name that has been changed

only because the person was known to my family. There have been others. I have been questioned walking in my own neighborhood, treated rudely by sales clerks, had firecrackers thrown at me from a truck, been flipped off just walking into a store, refused service at a farmer's market and more subtle things that leave me wondering. I know I'm not alone in these experiences, but I am a citizen, born and raised by a family whose ancestors fought in the War of Independence. I'm afraid of my neighbors and my government.

I cannot even imagine what form that fear would take if I was an immigrant or here on a work or school visa. We need to stop and reflect before we make another mistake that will haunt this country for years to come.

Kulwinder

(translated from Punjabi)

My name is Kulwinder Singh. I moved from Stockton, California to Kent, Washington in 1999. I used to be a truck driver and have been driving a taxi ever since I moved to Washington. I have been blessed with two kids – one boy and one girl.

I want to tell you how the events since September 11, 2001 have changed my life. On September 13th, at about 11:00 p.m., I was told by the dispatch staff to pick up two customers from Gregory, a restaurant close to the airport. When I reached the location, there was no one outside – so I went in and asked the bartender for the people waiting for the ride by their name.

The bartender told the guests that their Taxi was here. One of the gentlemen came outside along with me and started shouting, "You are a terrorist". I knew he was mistaking me because of my turban and beard and I explained to the gentleman that I was a Sikh and did not have anything to do with the terrorist. The person was a little drunk – so I ignored him. I thought my job is just to take the people to their destination and not to worry about their comments. The other gentleman stayed inside.

The other person did not show for about 10 minutes. So I requested the gentleman who came along with me that he should please call his friend. I said if you would like me to wait longer, I will need to switch the meter on and you can pay for the wait as long as you like. At this, he got very agitated and started shouting again "You are a terrorist, Osama! You have ruined us and blown up America." I ignored him because he seemed to be drunk. Finally the other passenger showed up and the first gentleman told the second man, "He is a terrorist. This terrorist cannot wait his taxi for us." I thought that now that they both were here, I should take them to their destination. But instead, the both of them joined together in calling me names and shouting at me. I became very alarmed and was afraid for my safety. So I refused to drive them and requested them to vacate my taxi. I was afraid that rather than taking them in the taxi, where they may try and harm me on the way, it was better for me to drop them here. When they refused to get out of the taxi, I said that I would have to call the police. They told me that I should not do so and when I tried to reach for my phone, they grabbed my arm. I jumped out of the cab and both of them grabbed me. They tore part of my beard and knocked my turban to the side. This was extremely humiliating to me as a Sikh. I tried to push them to get away and ran inside the restaurant. I asked for help and then decided that no matter what, I will not let these two men get away. I knew they did not have a weapon and so I pursued them on foot and called 911 on my phone.

They crossed the road and I was on the phone with 911 when I saw a police car standing at a traffic light. The police woman chased after the two men and also called for other units. Another officer coming from the airport finally caught up with them and brought them back in his car. They were questioned and so was I. Then the officer approached me and said that she would take them out of the county and they would never trouble me again. She also advised me against filing a formal complaint but I absolutely refused. My concern was that tomorrow they will meet another taxi driver wearing a turban and will behave the same way if they were allowed to go free. I said I absolutely want to file a case and want you to arrest them. I also called dispatch and told them that the lady officer was refusing to write the report. The dispatch advised me to stay

strong and again request for filing the report. If she refuses, I was told that I should write down her name, car number and badge number. Finally because of my persistence, she filed a report. Other officers came and then filed my complaint. They were very helpful after that. The people from the restaurant also came to give witness account. The two men were only given a short three months sentence.

Ever since then, my wife has been very scared to let me drive a taxi. But I have a family to raise, a mortgage to pay and I realize despite these dangers to my life, I will still need to drive the taxi and work toward a better future for my children and family. I still try to be very careful and particularly avoid going to restaurants where people are less than polite. There are times that I still meet customers who make comments like "You are Bin Laden. You are terrorist," but I ignore them thinking that even if I press charges they will soon be free and may harm me even further. I have learned to avoid creating a scene.

The court asked me what could be done to fulfill my loss. I told them that there was nothing that anyone could offer me that would heal my pain. This event has broken my heart. I live in anguish, pain and fear.

Issa

Good morning ladies & gentlemen,
I'd like to start off my brief testimony with showing my sincere gratitude to each and every one of you for your invaluable support. My name is Issa Qandeel. I'm a Jordanian American, born and raised in a Palestinian refugee camp. I migrated six years ago to the US, following the path of the millions since it's inception, seeking a dream that I could not translate into reality but in this land of the free.

During the six years I've lived here, I've been enjoying the freedom that I could not find anywhere else including my home country. Unfortunately, that dream and freedom were shattered on the eve of 9/11, along with the dreams of all the victims who, unjustifiably, lost their lives, or the ones who had to suffer the consequences of that day.

My personal experience with 9/13, I was attacked by a person that I have never met before. My only crime, in his eyes, was that I belong to a different denomination of faith than his.

I was heading to my car in the Idris Mosque's parking lot, after finishing the last prayer service at around 10:00 pm. When I got to my car, Mr. Patrick Cunningham was just done with pouring gas on the cars in an attempt to burn them. Taking by surprise, I asked "what are you doing here, sir?" He did not respond, but started walking away with the can of gas in one hand and a hand gun, I thought it was a torch by then, in the other. "I'm sorry but you have to tell me what you are doing here before you leave?" I said, when he turned around and said "I'm gonna shoot you." He was only few feet from me when he started shooting. Fortunately, the first three times his gun did not work, and the fourth missed. He ran away to his car. I asked a friend of mine to call the police before I followed him. Trying to flee the scene, he ran into a huge electricity pole and hurt himself before the police and the ambulance showed up.

I requested to meet him during his detention, but he refused. I tried to help him in any way I could. Most importantly, I forgave him from the bottom of my heart and prayed to God that he guides him through the path of light.

Although it's been a little over a year now, I'm still confused about that whole experience. I still don't feel safe. Until today I have to look around much more than any normal person does. I never dare to leave my backyard door open. But I'm sad much more than I'm scared. My dream has been hijacked. After spending 25 years of my life in the Middle East, I thought I found the land of my dreams. It sure has been for the last 6 years. Now these dreams seem blurry. And that land seems too far away. The sadness is indescribable and there is nowhere to go when you are home but still feel homesick. Thank you for giving me the chance to speak before you.

Government Action

Introduction – Ann Benson, Directing Attorney, Immigration Project of the Washington Defender Association

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11th attacks, many of the actions taken by President Bush, his Administration and Congress came out of the desperation of the moment. Certainly some of these actions were necessary and practical steps in response to the gravity of the situation.

However, over the past twelve months, President Bush, Attorney General John Ashcroft and others within the Administration have taken a series of actions that we believe are unwarranted, unwise and threaten our very system of open democracy.

We would like to take a moment to highlight just some of these actions:

September 20, 2001: Detention without Charges

- Regulation issued by Department of Justice (DOJ)
- Allows for detention without charges for 48 hours or "an additional reasonable period of time" in the event of an "emergency or other extraordinary circumstance"
- Allowed for many of the over 1,200 Sept. 11th detainees to be held without charges

September 21, 2001: Immigration Hearings Closed to Public

- Chief Immigration Judge, acting on behalf of Attorney General John Ashcroft -
- Gives order to Immigration Judges permitting certain "special interest" deportation hearings to be closed to the public for national security

September 24, 2001: Pres. Bush Issues Order Declaring National Emergency

The order requires the executive agencies to utilize all legal means to stem the flow of money supporting terrorist organizations throughout the world

October 26, 2001 – Congress Passes and President signs USA Patriot Act into law

- Congress, with the support of the President and DOJ, passes the USA Patriot Act
- The Act vastly expands the power of the government to monitor, target and apprehend both immigrants and U.S. citizens

November 9, 2001: Interviews of Arab/Muslim Men

The Attorney General issues a memo directing the FBI to conduct interviews of 5000 Arab/Muslim men

November 13, 2001: Military Tribunals

- President Bush issues an Executive Order authorizing creation of military tribunals to try non-citizens alleged to be involved in international terrorism
- These tribunals: permit holding people in military custody incommunicado, do not permit access to the courts and have the power to issue death sentences

November 16, 2001: Secrecy Regarding 9-11 Detainees

- The DOJ states that it will not release the names and locations of the September 11th detainees

- By this time it is believed that there are more than 1200 Sept. 11th detainees – almost all Arab & Muslim men

December 4, 2001: Senate Hearings

- Senate holds hearings on the status of September 11th detainees
- The Attorney General testifies that those who question and resist his policies are “aiding and abetting terrorism”

January 25, 2002: “Alien Absconder Apprehension Initiative”

6,000 men from “al Qaeda-harboring countries” will be the first to be targeted for apprehension under the “Alien Absconder Apprehension Initiative” implemented by the INS and the DOJ

February 26, 2002: Interview Report

- DOJ issues a final report on its project of interviewing the 5,000 Arab/Muslim men
- Conducted actual “interviews” with 2261 of these Arab/Muslim men
- Less than 20 taken into custody
- only 3 charged with crimes (unrelated to 9-11)
- No evidence was found to link any of them to “terrorism”

March 19, 2002: Additional Interviews

DOJ announces another round of interviews of 3000 Arab/Muslim men

April 2002: INS Launches Operation Tarmac

- INS begins conducting raids on airports throughout the country in the name of national security
- 366 immigrants have been arrested at 17 airports nationwide

April 10, 2002: Local Law Enforcement Power to Enforce Immigration Law

Press reports that the DOJ is considering a policy that would allow for local law enforcement officers to have the power to enforce federal immigration laws since implemented

June 26: President Declares Two US Citizens “Enemy Combatants”

- President announces his order declaring US Citizens Jose Padilla and Yassar Hamdi “Enemy Combatants” but refuses to release the actual order
- No criminal charges filed against them
- President says they can be held until the “end” of the war on terrorism without access to an attorney and without access to the federal courts

July 26, 2002: Address Notification to be Filed with INS

The Attorney General proposes a rule “clarifying” that certain immigrants must provide an address to the INS, including a change of address within 10 days. Failure to do so is a criminal violation and can trigger deportation.

August 12, 2002: Registration and Monitoring of Certain Non-immigrants

The Attorney General issues a regulation requiring certain non-citizens from 25 Arab and/or Muslim countries to be fingerprinted and photographed

September 2002 – Scrutiny of Middle Eastern Students

By September 9th, more than 200 college administrators have been requested by the Federal Government to provide information on their Middle Eastern students

These actions by our government reflect a disturbing vision of national security. This is especially true when seen in light of their results. As of today, none of the over 1,200 Sept. 11th “special interest” detainees have been indicted for terrorist activity; most have been deported for visa violations.

Most of these actions were implemented with little or no public debate, or input from the people, about whether or not such actions were appropriate responses to the September 11th attacks. Even today, there is a continued push to quell public debate by implying that those who question our current path are against America. We reject this notion and say that public debate is one of the founding principles of this country and essential to a healthy democracy.

There is no proof that sacrificing our human and civil rights will make us more secure. In fact, we believe that the opposite is true. We cannot compromise our most basic freedoms in the name of security. If we do, we shall, as Benjamin Franklin said, be deserving of neither.

The testimonies you will hear in this section relate to specific people and families in our community that have been the target of these Bush Administration policies. Again, we remind you that these are single incidents: for each of these, there are countless more that have not been heard.

Testimonies

Mohamed Hamoui

My name is Mohamed Hamoui. My family came to United States in 1992. Three months later my father left his job as pilot for Syrian president and was able to escape Syria and make it to our new home in America where freedom truly exists. We applied for asylum, got our work permits and paid our taxes; not once did we break the law. We were young and did not know what was going on, but we were happy that my father was alive and with us. It's heartbreaking that such a beautiful country with such wonderful people can have such a hideous and gruesome government. I hoped with all my heart that America doesn't join the club. Then September 11 came along. It was a day of horror and heroism. It was the day that changed America.

On February 22, 2002 something happened that I never thought possible for, after all, this is America. Yet, that morning, at 5 AM, something did occur that would severely revolutionize our life forever. My parents, and my sister, were stolen away from us. About 7 FBI and INS agents barged into our once wonderful home and dragged them all out of bed, with guns and flashlights. I couldn't have even imagined this eight months ago, but now it is something that I replay every day of my life. My 14 year old sister heard screaming outside her bedroom. Being a heavy sleeper, she put the pillow over her head. Some man came over to her bed and told her to get up. She whined. She never thought something more important than sleeping was occurring. She looked over to her sister's bed and it was empty. She recalls wondering why they are going in her closet, why are all these people in her room, and she wanted them to get out. She was walked upstairs. She looked around the living room; my family was already seated, except my mom. She took a seat and a moment later, my mother was walked in also with another INS agent. Her face was red and puffy, she had been crying. She was still putting on her scarf. After we were all seated down, a few of the agents sat down on our dining room table. 3 agents were standing discussing some "hilarious" book. She wanted them to explain what was going on. One walked around. He looked at our pictures on the mantel. He stood staring at a picture of my father, which was taken when he was flying a plane. They weren't allowed to get water or a tissue or talk. All of this went on for about an hour. They got annoyed when my uncle asked if they had a search warrant. They answered, "Yes" without consideration, and I don't think they presented it to us.

After a while of wondering why they were dressed in FBI jackets, the agents on the table stood up and walked over. They asked us where our passports were. My father told them, he had his in the bedroom, his voice breaking. They informed them they were going to be deported back to Syria. My family broke into tears. They told my father to get up and show him where his passport was. He got up, and I heard him in the other room

pleading with the agent to just let the females stay home. He requested him to leave them out of it. My sisters are too young to be taken to jail until sent back to Syria. I suppose it worked. They left my little sister at home but they took the 20 year old. They came out, told my brother and my sister that they were to stay home. They both responded "WHAT?" at the same time. My brother asked them if they were going to send them back tonight. The agent gazed at him like he was annoyed. He replied, "Well you don't have to worry about that. We're not just going to send them off to Syria on a plane...not without you anyway." They got out a Polaroid camera. They told my sister to stand, her back to the wall. They took a picture. Her eyes started to water, she was petrified. They made her turn to the left then to the right. This wasn't right. She is not a criminal! No one innocent, especially a minor should ever go through that. It made us feel low, like we had done something wrong. And then they were gone. We didn't even say goodbye to them. We didn't get to hug them. Now my little sister and my little brother have been scatted among homes waiting to see their parents come home in Lynnwood.

My mother, my father, and my 20-year old sister have been suffering tremendously during their 7 month detention. My father escaped jail and torture in Syria because his flying accident that was not his fault only to find himself locked up for being a Syrian pilot. He keeps telling me he would rather spend a year in INS detention than spending one week in Syrian jail. Because there is justice in this country but I ask myself where is the justice in this world. My mother currently suffers from Crohns disease. It's a very bad intestinal infection that does not have a cure. She has to keep a very strict diet. And has been taken to the hospital too many times and this prove that they are not providing the proper diet or treatment. Recently the I.N.S. has, who I believe, caused and ignored a lump in her breast. Her health is drastically deteriorating. My mother honestly believes that if she isn't out of there soon, she will die. My 20 year old sister is confused, she just wants out, she tells me she misses food, her bed, her family and her freedom. She actually thinks that Arab Muslims are no longer welcome in this country and it breaks her heart that a country that she loves and calls home since she was 9 years old is making her go through this.

Putting all that aside for now, there's an even bigger dilemma. Two federal courts have found serious legal and constitutional questions concerning the case of my family. This includes claims under the Convention against Torture and ineffective assistance of counsel. Three expert witnesses have concluded that my family will be tortured, and possibly killed if forced to return to Syria. The I.N.S. should stop trying every effort to deport my family and reconsider the instant release of my family until the Court of law has determined our fate.

I condemn and hold the I.N.S. reliable for exceeding the bounds of human dignity and justice with the unlawful and callous detention of my family. I abhor the abusive mistreatment and the crude measures used by the I.N.S. to crush our spirit. I demand that my family be released immediately, as mandated by law, in accordance with the respect for human dignity, human rights and American law. If not anything for the sake of us the kids, including a 13-year-old American Citizen, the family should be reunited. So please, help me save my family and our dream.

Ricardo

My name is Ricardo. I work with some of the families of people who were deported after the INS raided some airport area worksites at SeaTac airport earlier this year. Operation Tarmac, a records review put in place to improve security in airports because of the terrorist attacks, led to indiscriminate sweeps in which many people lost their jobs in surprise raids. The INS persuaded some employers here in Seattle to collaborate with them, calling phony meetings and dressing up in the employers' uniforms.

I want to read you the testimony of one person:

The INS went to my job and took papers. Then they came to my house to pick me up. My husband, my cousins and my three young daughters were there. They looked through my papers, identification and my personal belongings. They reported my cousins. They then deported my cousins to my country. This deeply affected my entire family. I feel sad and feel as though this is

my fault, because I was working to feed my family and put a roof over their heads. My husband, my three young daughters and I were given a court appointment. We went to court where they decided to deport me to my country. I was given a date when I am to voluntarily leave this country. If I leave this country I will suffer greatly in my country, but if I stay here I am not in compliance with the rule and regulations of the INS.

Some of the families of the deported workers put together a statement to share with you today. This is their statement:

We always heard that this was the country of opportunities. We arrived here with many illusions and dreams to improve our lives. We worked honestly and hard to make our dreams reality and to help the development of this country with our daily work. As recognition for our arduous work we received the betrayal of our employer. We feel we have been deceived by this country. But at the same time we would like to thank the North American people for their help and solidarity.

If you asked us what has been the most difficult thing for us in this experience, the answer would be easy: the separation from our loved ones. Imagine that one day your husband or wife was going to work and does not return home, disappears. And you do not know what happened to them. What would you say to your children when they ask for their parents? Also, we realized that you can have access to several material goods in this country, but these cannot be enjoyed while our families are separated. It is like living in a gold cage--it is still a prison.

It is a strange coincidence that the INS organized the raid just when people almost did not travel because of the events of September 11. When already they did not need us, they threw us into the trash.

In order to avoid this deep suffering of the separation of whole families created by the deportations and to recognize in its right dimension the value of the work of the immigrant workers, we demand a General Amnesty. Thanks, brothers and sisters for your solidarity and long live the workers' struggle.

These workers were not a threat – they were not even working in a security clearance area! They were honest people trying to support their families.

Naseem

My name is Naseem Tuffaha, and I am the Director of the Seattle Chapter of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. As you have heard, the Department of Justice Interview program was one in a series of Federal initiatives that targeted Arab and Muslim men. This program yielded no results of people connected with terrorist activity and it caused tremendous fear in our communities. We believe the program amounts to institutionalized racism because it assumes that by interviewing Arab and Muslim men, there are going to be answers found simply because these people share the same ethnic background as a group of 15 criminals. It's hard to imagine another situation, regardless of the scale, where such an approach would have been employed or tolerated. People in my community feel that they are now guilty until proven innocent, that there is a special set of standards applied only to them, and that they have to go out of their way in their daily lives to prove that they are innocent and that they are not like those terrorists. This is neither a reasonable nor just burden to place on people.

I would like to read the testimony of one of those interviewed by the FBI. He was lucky enough not be detained, and he agonized over whether to come himself and speak but in the end, decided he and his family could not afford the risk.

I immigrated to the United States over eight years ago with the hopes of completing my college degree and consequently having the opportunity for building a better future for my family and myself. I have always been active in my community and never faced discrimination or bias. The fact that I was an Arab and a Muslim was never a negative factor. After September 11th, things changed dramatically for Muslim and Arab Americans. Blamed for sharing the religion and nationality of the accused terrorists, men with those characteristics were targeted and sought out for questioning. As I read about the thousands of men that were rounded up solely because of their race and religion, I never suspected that I would be included.

It was not until I applied for permanent residency status that I learned that the FBI was seeking me for questioning. After months of delay for a paper work, my lawyer uncovered the reason for the postponement. INS could not find me and the FBI was holding my file, along with hundreds of other files belonging to students that had emigrated in recent years from Middle Eastern countries, until I could be located. A forty-five minute telephone interview ensued, in which I was asked if I was "terrorist". Had I been located earlier, I would have most likely been jailed and interviewed personally until I could be cleared.

I have never had any connection to any terrorist organization and never violated the law or went out of status. I was sought only because of my nationality and religion. My situation is small compared to the many stories of discrimination and injustice that occur every day against Arabs and Muslims in the United States. Most immigrants came to the United States to flee persecution in their own countries, and yet now they are targeted and viewed as a threat by the county that promised them freedom and acceptance. Islam is a peace loving religion, and to categorize Muslims as terrorists is an injustice.

Abdinasir Ali

My name is Abdinasir Ali Nur and I am the Managing Partner of Maka Mini Market located in the Rainier Valley.

The events of September 11 have had a large impact on my life and my business. At approximately 8:00 A.M. on November 7, 2001, I received a phone call saying that my store was being raided by federal agents. I rushed to the store and was personally searched by the officer. Federal agents took most of my inventory, including frozen meat, coolers and shelving units, and then posted a notice on my door shutting down my business. I was given no explanation for the raid, or for the closure of my store. I later found out that the real target of the raid was a money-wiring business located next to my store. I was never charged with any wrongdoing.

These events have ruined my business. Much of the inventory taken from my store spoiled and there was serious property damage. More importantly, since Maka was not allowed to operate, I lost many of my customers and over a month's worth of revenue. For a small business like my own, such losses are terrible, and we have not yet recovered. Fortunately, the ACLU is helping me to try and get compensation from the government for the goods they took from my store. I hope there will be some justice.

But my problems did not end after my store reopened in December 2001. Not even a month after getting permission to reopen, I received a letter from the United States Department of Agriculture charging me with food stamp trafficking and suspending my ability to accept food stamps. Because most of my customers are low-income families who depend on food stamps for their grocery purchases, my business was effectively shut down.

By not allowing Maka and two other Somali grocers in the area to accept food stamps, the government not only hurt the store owners, but also hurt the members of the Somali community. My store is one of the oldest in the Rainier Valley area. Like the other two grocers, my main business is the sale of Halal meat. Halal meat is meat that has been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law. As a Muslim, we are forbidden to eat meat that is not Halal. Because we could not accept food stamps, members of the Somali community were unable to purchase Halal meat for over four months, and meat is the main staple of the Somali diet. The government accused us because they did not understand our Somali shopping habits. The USDA said that Maka had very high transactions compared to a American mini-mart of the same size. But Maka is more like a meat market with meat slicers and grinders. Also we have very big families of 8-10 people and we buy lots of food. There were explanations for all the government's charges.

I had an opportunity to explain these shopping habits to the USDA both in writing and in person. But my explanations were not accepted and I was laughed at and ridiculed. In March of 2002, I received notice that I was permanently disqualified from accepting food stamps. Two other Somali grocers were disqualified at the same time, and because I did not believe I was being treated fairly, I requested an administrative review of the

disqualification. Happily, after nearly 5 months, I received news that the USDA had reversed its decision to disqualify me and the other two stores from the food stamp program.

Although I am pleased with the outcome of these events, I am very worried that my business and reputation have been badly hurt. Where I once ran a successful small business, I now struggle to make ends meet. I have lost months worth of revenue and find it difficult to cover my expenses. In addition to these financial costs, my family and I have paid an emotional toll in the aftermath of September 11. I have now been accused twice of wrongs that I have not committed, and this feels very bad to me.

I would especially like to take this opportunity to thank my attorneys, the Hate Free Zone Campaign, our neighbors, and the Somali community. Thank you.

Ana Maria

My name is Ana Maria. I was born in Ensenada, Mexico. I have lived in the United States since 1998. I am an immigrant woman who has survived domestic violence at the hands of my former husband, Carlos. During the time that I was married to Carlos, he was physically and emotionally violent against me many times. I finally got the courage to leave my husband. I got a lot of help to change my life. I now have a good job and a Green Card. I have also been able to go to counseling to help me and my children with the effects of my husband's violence.

Like so many immigrant women in my situation, when I had no papers and was trapped in my life with Carlos, I was terrified to call the police. I feared that they would turn me over to the INS for deportation and that I would be permanently separated from my children. After I left Carlos and was living at the shelter and getting counseling, I learned that the police are not supposed to do this – that they are supposed to help women like me.

Now, I understand that the government is trying to give police the power to arrest people for deportation, just like the INS agents. This will create a situation that is even worse for immigrant women who are living in situations of domestic violence. We already have so much to fear – from our abusive husbands, from the INS and now from the police. On behalf of myself and all immigrant women who have suffered domestic violence, I would ask our government to not give this power to the police.

Hilary Han

My name is Hilary Han and I am an immigration lawyer. I am testifying on behalf of my client, Elyes Glaissia. For the past year, my partner Vicky Dobrin and I have been representing Mr. Glaissia, a 28-year-old Tunisian man, in his deportation proceedings. Elyes entered the United States as a tourist in 1998 and has been in the United States since that time. He has worked at a number of different jobs to support himself in this country. Prior to September 11th, Elyes had never been arrested for anything, nor accused of committing any crimes.

He is a devout Muslim. He moved from California to Washington State in the beginning of 2001. In the summer of 2001, he was living in Tacoma with two fellow Tunisians. A woman from their mosque asked if another woman from their mosque named Ann Andersen and her son, Chris, could stay with them temporarily. Over the next six weeks, Ann and Chris lived with Elyes and his roommates in their apartment. At the beginning of September, Elyes and his roommates asked them to leave, since they were planning to vacate the apartment at the end of the month. Then September 11 happened.

On September 14, Ann and Chris were at a bus stop in Tacoma, and Ann made a report to a police officer there. According to this report, Ann said that Elyes was a Muslim extremist who had expressed his approval of the Sept. 11 attacks. She allegedly told the officer that he went around the apartment talking about "killing more Americans." She also allegedly said that she overheard him talking on the telephone in Arabic.

Although she didn't understand the Arabic, she heard mixed-in reference in English to blowing up the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and the INS building. When asked for her address, Ann gave the address at Elyes's apartment. After this, she seemingly disappeared.

Elyes was arrested by the INS on September 16. For the first week or week and a half of his detention, he was held in solitary confinement. In an interview with an INS deportation officer immediately after his arrest, he categorically denied making the statements alleged in the police report.

The FBI also interviewed Elyes. The interview lasted just ten or fifteen minutes. Again, Elyes denied ever having made the statements. The FBI told him that they would make inquiries with the Tunisian government. They have never gone back to interview Elyes, they have never interviewed Ann Andersen, they have not brought any kind of criminal or material witness charges against him. No FBI agent testified during Elyes's deportation proceedings. When we requested a copy of Elyes's FBI file, we received a letter saying that no file exists.

Elyes was in deportation proceedings because he had overstayed his tourist visa. The INS has never formally charged him with any of the deportation grounds relating to terrorism, nor has the federal government accused him of any crime. However, the INS said that the allegations in the police report made Elyes a danger to the national security and that he should not be released from INS detention during his deportation proceedings. The immigration judge agreed, saying the police reports were made by police officers, so they must be true.

Meanwhile, Elyes applied for asylum. Over the last 15 years, the Tunisian government has arrested and tortured many deeply religious young Muslim men, because they fit the government's profile of a terrorist. Elyes believes that because he fits within this profile and because he has already been accused by the US government of being a danger to national security, he is at risk of torture in Tunisia. A University of Washington Professor confirmed that Elyes is a risk of torture in Tunisia. However, the immigration judge denied Elyes request for asylum and ordered him deported to Tunisia.

In April of this year, a private investigator found Ann Andersen. When asked about the police report, she told the investigator that she had not said those things and, more importantly, that they were not true. She agreed to prepare a written statement and testify in Elyes's case. She strongly denied that Elyes had ever made the statements alleged in the police report. Her son Chris also testified. He said exactly the same thing.

Now that Ann had finally testified, and she had said that the allegations in the report were not true, the immigration judge issued a final decision in the case. He said that he still believed that Ann had made the statements and that Elyes is a danger to the national security and someone who is likely to engage in terrorist activities in the U.S. Today, more than one year after his arrest, Elyes remains in INS detention while he appeals the immigration judge's decisions.

Climate of Fear, Discrimination & Intolerance

Introduction—Lena Khalaf Tuffaha, Media Director, American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Seattle

While many public officials are quick to condemn hate crimes and discrimination, we call to your attention today the fact that the actions of the government have created a general climate where racial profiling and discrimination are tolerated and perpetuated: in airports, on the streets, in the workplace, and in our own neighborhoods.

According to the Labor and Immigrant Organizing Network (LION), discrimination in the workplace increased dramatically after September 11th. Employers have been quick to call in the FBI or INS, or to fire workers for minor incidents. As Arshad Majid, spokesman for the National Association of Muslim Lawyers, told the EEOC in December, immigrants have been "...forced from their jobs, labeled as criminals, and shunned from their professional communities for no perceptible reason other than the way they look, dress, speak, or worship."²

Government actions have directly contributed to this. For example, the Social Security Administration (SSA) has stepped up its "No Match" program, which informs employers of social security numbers that don't match its database. In the recent past, the SSA has sent out about 40,000 "No Match" letters to employers each year. This year, it is sending approximately 750,000 such letters. The result has been a surge in the number of workers being fired because they are suspected of not having proper documentation, even though the letter itself notes that a mismatch is not sufficient cause for firing a worker.³

In the wake of September 11, many states are considering measures that would deny immigrants access to driver's licenses. During the most recent state legislative sessions, including here in Washington State, approximately 46 bills were introduced that sought to restrict immigrants' ability to get driver's licenses. Most of these bills were put forth in the name of "anti-terrorism measures." These measures change the fundamental purpose of a driver's license, from a document that shows that a driver knows the rules of the road to a national identification card. They will force immigrants who must use a car to do so without testing, licensure and without insurance.

The criminal justice system, which was already focused disproportionately on communities of color, began to show renewed signs of racial profiling and disproportionate treatment, particularly to Arab, Muslim and Southeast Asian men. Immigrant communities of color became the target of increased suspicion and harsher treatment by police officers, the courts and related government agencies – such as the Child Protective Services.

While some of these actions can be traced to specific written government policies, many more cannot. All attest to a climate of increased discrimination and fear facing immigrant communities of color. When our federal and state governments engage in such actions as racial profiling, indiscriminate arrests, and secret detentions it creates the space, and sets the tone for businesses and employers, and, indeed communities and neighborhoods to engage in racist, discriminatory and dangerous, behavior.

The next testimonies will highlight these dangerous practices and their impacts on our communities.

² LION Draft Report report "Scapegoating Immigrant Workers: Bay Area Workers in the Aftermath of 9/11," page 4.

³ LION Draft Report page 8.

Testimonies

Noor

I am Noor and I am from Afghanistan I came to US Two years ago as a political asylee.

On July 13 this year, my girlfriend Lara and I went camping to Lake Moses which is located on Eastern Washington. We found a spot where there was about 40 people camping so we stopped by and asked them if we could camp there. They said they have been there about two days and no one has said anything so we started putting our tent up.

As I was putting the tent up the Sheriff pulled over just by my tent and asked me to leave. I asked him why and he said this is private land but he never told any of the other people there to leave. All the other people were white. My girlfriend and I were the only foreign-looking people there. He came right over to us.

As we were talking my girlfriend came over. Immediately, all the other people came over and stood around us. They were all drinking and everybody in their group was drunk. They smelled of alcohol. My girlfriend and I hadn't had any alcohol to drink. As soon as my girlfriend started to ask the sheriff questions, he assumed that the alcohol smell was from her. He said she was under age and had been drinking and he was going to give her a ticket. I was afraid he was going to arrest her. So I told him, okay, we won't camp here, but don't arrest her; we'll just leave. I told him we had not been drinking and said he didn't have a breathalyzer test and was assuming everything.

When I said this, the sheriff asked me for my driver's license. When I gave him my drivers license, he looked at my name and then told me I was under arrest and charged with obstructing a police officer. This was a big lie and I felt that he was just doing this because I am from the Middle East.

The sheriff took me to jail in my swimming suit. He would not allow me to put on any more clothes. And he never gave my drivers license back to me. Because I did not have ID, they would not let me bond out of jail. The jail called the INS, and because they thought I am some sort of illegal alien, I spend two days in jail till they check my back ground and released me on \$500 bond.

While I was in jail my girlfriend was left alone there, 3 hours away from home by herself, everyone was still in that camping area and these people were trying to get her drunk and also stole her car keys too. Fortunately, she had a spare key in her purse and she drove off in the middle of the night without knowing where to go any thing could have happened to her over there such as rape.

I felt this was a clear attack on me by the police over my religion and my nationality. When I went to court my lawyer advised me not to take my case to trial because if I lose, then I could be deported back to Afghanistan. So I pled guilty to lesser charges of disorderly conduct, even though I had not committed any crime. I was fined \$400 and paid \$500 to lawyer because the public defenders wouldn't take my case.

Even though a crime was committed against me, I had to plead guilty to a crime that I did not commit. I did this because I am afraid of the immigration consequences – that I would be deported because of these charges. I feel this is really unfair. I should be able to go to trial and fight my case without the fear that I would lose my life here in the United States. The only reason I came to America is to have freedom, civil rights and human rights which we didn't have in Afghanistan. But once again it happened to me the same thing which had in Afghanistan – the government abusing the people. I believe America is a great country. But this experience made me feel that the treatment of the police and INS to immigrants is unfair and unacceptable. And these immigration laws are taking away the rights of immigrants.

Susan E. Foster

My name is Susan Foster and I am a partner with the law firm of Perkins Coie. In April of this year I and others in my firm were asked to represent three local Somali Halal grocers who had been charged with food stamp trafficking. One of the grocers, Mr. Nur, has testified as to the tremendous impact that these events have had on him and his livelihood. However, the Government's actions also had a tremendous impact on

the Somali community: Three of the approximately six Somali Halal grocers in the Rainier Valley area were effectively shut down within a span of days, leaving hundreds of families without access to the Halal meat that forms the bulk of their diet. Public nurses were expressing concern over the deteriorating health of Muslim children and mothers were inundating local relief agencies and government officials with calls voicing concern and pleading for help. Community groups such as the Hate Free Zone Campaign and our local political officials banded together and sought relief from the USDA to stay or overturn the disqualifications, but without success. Ultimately, the City of Seattle itself and private donors opened their own pocket books to provide some limited relief to the Somali community and make some Halal meat available to the community pending reversals of the disqualifications.

Apart from the clear public health concern raised by the Government's actions, the grocers and the Community were deeply affected in a less perceptible manner. In the months following September 11th, the Somali Community had been the target of increasing government action, first by the FBI raid of hawalas and surrounding establishments and then by the disqualification of not one, but three local grocers. The community could not help but ask: Have post-9/11 fears led the government to target our community simply because of our country of origin, our religion or the color of our skin? My involvement with this matter was motivated out of a concern for the impact of these events on the community. However, my perspective as an attorney and a participant in the resulting legal action has led me to the inescapable conclusion that these fears of discrimination and bias are justified and that, indeed, there is a different set of rules now being applied to those who are deemed "suspect," simply because of their race, religion or ethnicity.

I would like to play now an excerpt from the USDA's interview of Mr. Nur in January 2001, prior to his disqualification. I ask you to remember that Mr. Nur was not at that time and at no time since been alleged to have any affiliation with any terrorist or terrorist-related group or activity. As you will see, however, in reviewing Mr. Nur's guilt or innocence for food stamp violations, the USDA did not see a simple small business owner, they saw a potential terrorist. In this excerpt, Mr. Nur has stepped out of the room, leaving the USDA investigators to converse amongst themselves:

[TAPE]

Man: Before we go any further, I just wanted to. . .

Woman: He stepped out for just a moment, Chris.

Man: Oh, he did?

Man: He went to get the letter.

Man: Oh.

[silence and unintelligible discussion deleted]

Man: He has an envelope there for us. Just getting it from _____.

(laughing)

Woman: Did he take it down the hallway?

Man: Yeah. The envelope has no lines. . .

Man: Maybe a bomb in it or something.

"Maybe he has a bomb in it or something." These USDA officials were there to hear Mr. Nur's explanations and assess his guilt or innocence. Yet, they had already categorized him as a potential bomb-carrying terrorist – not based upon any evidence of such conduct -- but simply based upon his ethnicity and religion. It is clear that Mr. Nur never had a chance to defend against the food stamp trafficking allegations and that his explanations regarding the Somali cultural and purchasing practices would fall on deaf ears. Indeed, as the next excerpt shows, for these grocers, the fundamental precept that one is presumed innocent until proven guilty simply did not apply.

[TAPE]

HM: *Yeab, OK, I understand. It is not illegal for us, he said, to check by telephone for the person if they ask it.*

Man: *No, the trafficking in foods stamps is illegal and you have not proven yet that you haven't been doing that.*

HM: *Are you say that the incident? _____?*

Man: *I said, no, you're right, what you just said is not illegal. However, trafficking in food stamps is illegal and you have not yet proven that you have not been trafficking.*

In this biased atmosphere and against these odds, the grocers were in fact unable to "prove their innocence" and were disqualified from the food stamp program. And, even on appeal they were treated differently from others and denied fundamental due process rights. For example, the USDA refused to provide a copy of the full record of the allegations - in the face of the Review Officer's expressed surprise and assertion that the record is customarily provided to the appealing party. Unlike others in this situation these Somali grocers were denied one of the most fundamental due process rights of our justice system: *the right to review the very evidence presented against you.*

Targeted governmental action, biased enforcement, a lack of due process and a lack of fundamental fairness and justice. The question remains in this and other cases: What is the specific Governmental directive that has authorized, condoned or allowed this type of discriminatory treatment? And, what is the Government going to do to ensure that our community does not continue to live in fear of Governmental persecution? An open government allows these questions to be posed. To be debated. And to be answered.

The problem is that the Government has refused to provide the grocers with access to the necessary documents, and our Freedom of Information Act requests have either been completely ignored or only grudgingly complied with. Documents were withheld, and even the very tape you just heard was not initially provided: We saw a reference to the tape in another document and followed up only to learn that the tape was in the possession of the very official who had first responded to our FOIA request. Then, upon receiving the tape we discovered that individual voices and words could not be understood and then spent considerable time and effort to enhance the tape. However, it was the *wrong tape*. Only after that did we receive the tape you have just heard.

As one Judge has recently stated:

Access to government records is critical to earning and keeping citizens' faith in their public institutions and to ensuring that those institutions operate within the bounds of law. Difficult times such as these have always tested our fidelity to the core democratic values of openness, government accountability, and the rule of law. The Court fully understands and appreciates that the first priority of the executive branch in a time of crisis is to ensure the physical security of its citizens. By the same token, the first priority of the judicial

branch must be to ensure that our Government always operates within the statutory and constitutional constraints which distinguish a democracy from a dictatorship.

With the assistance of the community, political leaders, local relief organizations, a large law firm and even the assistance of PriceWaterhouseCooper, a large accounting firm, the disqualification decisions for these three Somali grocers were ultimately reversed. Clearly, however, not every person affected by such government action can obtain this level of assistance. September 11th left us all with a sense of deep and abiding fear: when the Prowlers did a fly by of the Stadium last Sunday, I was in my office and heard the approaching planes coming closer and closer before finally going around the building. I and others in the building were literally shaking with fear. But I am just as deeply shaken by a fear that the fundamental core values of Democracy that I learned as a teenager and which ultimately led me to a career in law are being trampled: That "all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights." That "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation." That "Justice is for all." These are not just words and in our pursuit of security I ask that we renew our commitment to these principals and ensure that there is in fact, justice for all. Thank you.

Hardeep

My name is Hardeep Singh. I am 24 years old and was born and raised in Seattle. I am in my third year of Law school at Tulane Law School.

Like all Americans, Sikh Americans have contributed richly to the workplace and America in general. The first Asian American to become a congressman was a Sikh. The inventor of fiber optics that forms the heart of all telecommunications around the world is a Sikh American. The Chief Marketing Officer for Palm Inc. is a Sikh American. America's largest peach grower is a Sikh American. And last but not least, one of the first doctors to arrive on the scene to treat victims at ground zero, and indeed a true hero of 9/11, is a Sikh American.

Some fellow Americans, however, when they look at me or any other Sikh, don't always see a fellow American. I have always been treated differently. I have been pointed out and set apart in many public places, by both the general public and also by people who have some governmental authority. Especially at airports, where, although they claim that all searches are random, I have been searched about 80% of the times I fly. I specifically remember sitting next to a woman after going through multiple searches. She was talking to the person next to her, maybe her husband I don't know. She told him that she didn't understand why people complain about being searched at the airport. That it does not happen that frequently. I interrupted and asked her how many times she had been searched, she responded by saying once. I told her I had been searched approximately 8 times; I had flown probably 5 or 6 times. She said she had only flown 3 or 4 times.

It is not really the fact that I am being searched that bothers me. It is how others perceive it. For instance, I clearly remember standing in line when the person in front of me made some comment about the person being searched was not all suspicious and the government was wasting their time (the person being searched was an elderly woman). I wondered if it was me being searched, how many of them would feel the same way. Further, when you are consistently picked out to be searched or treated differently you start to wonder whether there is something wrong with you.

Similarly, members of the community face further harassment in the airplane itself being asked to use the toilets in the back of the plane while everyone else is allowed to use the ones in the front. I cannot even explain how humiliating this experience can be when you are singled out for this treatment because of no other reason but your perceived identity.

I question the motives of the State or Federal agencies who have instituted this climate of fear and suspicion.

Finally, what bothers me the most is that when the public constantly see a certain group of people being picked out of the crowd on a consistent basis they also become suspicious of that group. What I mean is that when you go the airport or other areas and you are always confronted with a turbaned man being searched you begin to develop or continue to develop stereotypes that turbaned people are bad or at the very least deserving of some higher scrutiny than the average citizen.

Ultimately, in light of all the events that have occurred, in the face of all the harassment I have personally faced, and many that look similar to me have faced I have had to change my view on what I once thought of the country where I was born and raised believing in the ideals of American life. At some point, and I admit that it was a bit naive; I believed that there was no such thing as a second class citizen. But now I have realized that I am living proof of the fact that second class citizens do exist, and that the government both state and Federal; the executive branch, the judicial branch and the legislative branch are willing to give a false sense of security to the first class citizens at the expense of a second class citizen.

Asha

My name is Asha Mohamed, and I am here today on behalf of the Somali Community to share our experience, our nightmare that our community has been through and still is going through. The Somalis they left their home country for fear of persecution, for fear for their lives, and their family. They came to the United States of America for freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and the freedom that a human being is entitled to. After the nightmare of September 11th, that we as a community shared and witnessed in horror with the rest of the world the Somalis once again they were back where they ran from - from a nightmare of terror, of fear, of their neighbors, to be reluctant to trust. They felt they were back in Somalia.

A few days after the attack, a 16-year-old Somali girl was attacked and stabbed at a gas station in West Seattle. About four days later six Somali women were fired from their employer for wearing the hijab. Soon after, the Hawalas were raided, and then, as you heard, three grocery stores were targeted by the USDA. Our whole community was suffering from this. First, we couldn't send money to our families and then we couldn't even do our shopping for food. Our children were suffering from not being able to eat our Halal meat. Even the school nurses testified that our children were weak in school because of this. Still, a lot of cab drivers are getting harassed from the police and clients. They are afraid to come out and stand for their rights. People are getting calls from FBI agents who are asking questions about relatives and other personal questions. The media is not helping at all. For example, the media showed Somalis celebrating at an important holiday and made it seem like they were celebrating the tragedy. But we were not. Why would we celebrate? This is our new home. It could have been any of us in that building. After September 11th, didn't matter if you were a US citizen. It didn't matter if you were a US resident. It didn't matter anymore. Once again we had no rights. We have no voice. But today we are here to speak out.

I wear hijab. Since September 11, people look at me different. They prejudge you, and I am always looking over my shoulder. I don't feel safe after September 11, but I don't know where else to go. I see these signs "Justice for All" I see these speeches from a lot of leaders that says that America is for everybody, that America is for all. But, this is not what we feel. We feel rejected, we experience hatred and violence. This community is desperately seeking peace and safety like all of us. Today we are here to say, as community, enough is enough, enough with the targeting, enough with harassment. We are not terrorist but we are your neighbor, co-worker, schoolmate. We are here the same reason your ancestors came here - for fear of persecution, freedom of religion. But, yet in 2002, our community cannot convey the message of freedom and justice for ALL... Please do something about it.

Historical Perspective

Mrs. Mako Nakagawa

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), Past President, Seattle Chapter
Former Evacuee, *Camp Harmony*, Western Washington Fairgrounds, Puyallup, Washington;
Internee, *Minidoka*, War Relocation Authority Internment Camp, Hunt, Idaho; Prisoner of War, *Crystal City*, Department of Justice Isolation and Detention Center, Crystal City, Texas; Resident of Seattle, Washington; Retired - Public School Teacher, Administrator, Trainer/Consultant

The stories are particularly touching for me, because for many of us in our community we hear these stories and it is "not again". We heard these stories 60 years ago and if there was one legacy from our experience we were hoping that the legacy is that it would never happen again. Sixty years ago, sixty years ago, I learned to put my hand over my heart and pledge allegiance to the American flag for liberty and justice for all. Isn't it ironic that I learned those beautiful, ideal American words when I was a prisoner in America's concentration camp. Oh my goodness, sixty years ago it never should have happened. And this story, my story, is old, not recent. But, sixty years ago the stories are about the same.

The FBI and the Seattle police came to my father's house early in the morning, shoved my mother aside, stormed into the house, ransacked the closets, made a mess. Watched my father as he forced him to do his morning toiletries as he was being observed. My mother yelled upstairs "get dressed, get dressed" to my older sister because she liked to sleep in the nude. But, I guess the FBI did not know what she was saying in Japanese and they rushed upstairs drawing their guns.

My sister remembers the FBI putting his hands into the sugar bowl and into the rice bins and she was thinking "Oh, that's, that's horrible". I remember that's the second time in my life that I saw my mother cry. The first time was when grandma died, but this time her cry was very different. It scared me, it scared me. That's the only thing I remember is the second time I saw my mother cry.

My father was an optimist. This was on February 21, 1942. Two days, two days after Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which ultimately was the order that got us incarcerated. Two days after that, was also the day of my sister's, my older sister's 11th birthday. That's the day that it happened. That day is a big day in our family history. Our father was taken away and after he was gone the house was a mess. It was a mess. My father was an optimist and he decided he'd do his best to cooperate and maybe if he really did a good job of that he can be home for dinner to have birthday cake with the family. Of course that was never to be. He said the first time he did feel like maybe he would not be able to get back with the family is when he was forced to strip naked and they examined him. And, he said the humiliation was such that... He'll never forget.

I could tell you story after story, but the point is the same stories are being told again today. That just cannot be, you know? Pramila. Pramila said in her opening presentation that touched me, she said, "We say we are not willing to sacrifice those principles of liberty, democracy, and equality that defines us as a great nation. The cost is far too high to pay. One hundred and twenty thousand Americans of Japanese ancestry paid that price in 1942. You must make sure it doesn't happen again. When we say justice for all, it must be justice for all. It's not all but them.

Very, very few people stood up for us. We dearly remember those that did. But, very, very few people stood up for us then. And, there was not an audience like this for us at that time. But America needs us again. I love America, with all her faults, I love America. But, I think you and I, you and I in the audience, and the commissioners over there, we must do our very best to make sure that we live up to all our beautiful American ideals for all. Justice for all. Thank you.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Introduction--Pramila Jayapal

Before the next section, I would just like to take a moment to be in silence and to honor the voices of those that we have heard today and the voices of those who have not come here today because they are truly living in terror. So let's just take a moment and think about all the testimonies we've heard and then we'll go on to the next section, which is the recommendations section.

Thank you. You have heard today from a number of people whose lives have been dramatically affected by the events of September 11. These are not the single stories that you hear or read about in the media. These are people all over in our communities across America that are feeling these impacts. In many cases, they have been the victims of a coordinated government strategy that has ignored some of the fundamental rights that exist in our Constitution.

We express our deep concern regarding this assumption of new powers by the executive branch that poses risks to human rights and civil liberties, particularly when such powers have not been authorized by Congress and there has been no public debate concerning them.

We hope that this event here is the first of many across the country. We hope that all of you who are in the audience, who have come forward in spite of such great fear, will know that you are supported, you are listened to, and your voices will be heard. All of our voices will be heard. We would like to present 10 recommendations that we are asking all of you as representatives, elected and appointed officials, at local, state and federal levels to acknowledge and act upon, and to present those ten recommendations I'd like to ask Nama Kaddoura, Sorena Kaur, Elham Fara, Asha Mohamed, and Arlene Oki to please come up. These are recommendations put together by a large number of communities and we'd like to have representatives of those communities come forward to tell you what they are:

1. [NK] We ask that our elected officials review with a critical eye any new legislation or policy that contributes to the climate of fear and discrimination. All actions that promote a sense of inclusion and contribute to a reduced climate of fear and discrimination should be actively pursued.
2. At the Federal level, establish a Congressional Oversight Committee that can monitor the critical balance between security and civil rights, and that has authority over the actions of the Justice Department. We also endorse the proposal to create an Office of Civil Rights and Liberties, with a Senate-confirmed Director.
3. [SK] We call for federal, state and local officials to actively pursue strategies to improve the cultural competence of all law enforcement and state agencies, and to increase the representation of these communities in all agencies.
4. Individuals should not be targeted for investigation, detention or selective enforcement of the laws because of their race, religion, ethnic background or appearance, nor should they be denied employment because of their race, religion, or ethnic background.
5. [EF] Individuals should not be detained unless they are charged with either criminal or immigration violations. Individuals charged with crimes or immigration violations should not be arbitrarily detained before trial on such charges.
6. All persons have a right to effective assistance of counsel. There should be no interference with the attorney-client privilege.

7. [AM] Secret evidence should not be used to deprive individuals of their liberty or to try them for violations of criminal or immigration laws.
8. Due process protections must apply to any closure or wholesale seizure of the assets of any individual, business, charitable or religious organizations.
9. [AO] Governmental compilation of databases on individuals can pose severe dangers to freedoms of association, religion, speech and the right to privacy. The government should not compile databases on individuals without procedures to protect against labeling them as suspected terrorists on the basis of their lawful religious or political activities, associations, race, religion or ethnic background.
10. To encourage and engage in vigorous debate about the path on which the Bush Administration is taking us. It is critical to engage with the communities represented here on a regular basis about the impact of continuing Government actions and the pervasive climate of fear and discrimination.

Justice Charles Z. Smith: To our distinguished Commissioners, we have an opportunity for you to speak. I will direct questions to you either individually or in pairs, and ask you to respond for not more than 2.5 minutes. The first goes to our local representatives, member of City Council and member of County Council.

I understand that Seattle City Council Member Nick Licata must leave early, so we will start with Seattle City Council Member Licata and King County Council Member Gossett. The same question will be asked of the two of you:

Many of the troubling federal policies and procedures now being advocated by the Bush Administration are implemented here on the state and local level and often cannot happen without the complicity and collaboration of local officials. As you've heard in the testimonies today, these policies perpetuate and contribute to the increased discrimination and climate of fear facing our immigrant communities of color. Would you respond to the concerns over the city and county /or state's role in implementing federal policies that unfairly target immigrants?

Nick Licata: First of all, let me thank the HFZ Campaign for sponsoring this campaign and all the communities that hosted it. I also want to recognize that we've been joined by another Councilmember, Margaret Pageler, who is in the audience and there may be other members that are in the audience that I haven't seen. Let me also say *salaam alekum* and *buenos tardes*. I believe that this is a great nation because we have many cultures and that it's a great nation because you are part of it and that on a local level we maintain all the values that we all share, the values that are in the Bill of Rights, the values of freedom of expression, of speech, of assembly and that local government must and should do all it can to make sure that local police force does not become a branch of the INS, that we do not end up seeking out individuals for deportation, that our police should be used to protect the rights of individuals to lead lives without fear of being intimidated if they wear a turban or a scarf, to make sure that we do not have government agencies harassing and intimidating businesses like the USDA did regarding the Somali grocery stores in Rainier Valley. That I am personally working on legislation to introduce into City Council where we make clear that this city will enforce the laws fairly and not get involved in trying to become an appendage of the INS. It is critical that we remain a society that has an open democracy, an open society, and that we do not allow the tragic events of September 11 to turn this society into a society of fear and intimidation.

Larry Gossett: I wholeheartedly concur with all of us in this room making a commitment to fight against racial, religious and ethnic profiling and discrimination. I wholeheartedly agree that local governments—whether they be state, city, county—should fight hard against any effort of our colleagues or people in the local communities to impose this on us. I'd like to thank Senator Kline who, last year, when Governor Locke and Attorney General Gregoire in the excitement over 9-11, put forward a very onerous state law that they wanted passed that would make it easier for police to listen in on conversations, or search and seize people in

the community, that he took that piece of legislation and put it in his desk and didn't let it get a hearing. I strongly hope that people in this community, in a couple of weeks—that a couple of colleagues in my community are putting forward legislation saying that you shouldn't have any communication or correspondence people-to-people with Cuba because someone in 1979 said that Cuba was a terrorist nation without any kind of proof. We need to resist that. Finally, as an African American, a politician, I know the pain and the anger and the alienation and the sadness brought about by being racially profiled. We have a lot of problems in the African American community but the biggest rage right now is centering around issues related to racial profiling, where Robert Thomas Sr. was brutally killed by a King County police officer. And most people in the AA community think that this would not have happened if the police officer hadn't been trying to be a vigilante and go down off duty with no signature that says he's a police officer and tell some African American people to get the hell out of here. I think it's important that all of us get involved in organizing street heat to change all of these policies and I think that all of us must work to get everybody that we know to accept the equal humanity of all Americans and by doing so, we can solve a lot of these problems. Thank you.

Justice Smith: The next question is addressed to Washington State Senator Adam Kline and Washington State Assistant Attorney General Dave Horn. We are concerned about the state anti-terrorism legislation and other pending legislation, such as drivers' license bills, that target immigrant communities and the civil rights of all of us. Additionally, what is the state doing to promote policies that truly address the discrimination and climate of fear facing our communities of color and that promote a climate of inclusion? How do each of you respond to questions such as this?

Adam Kline: Thank you, Mr. Justice. Let me first remind everyone here that all Americans, other than our Native Americans, are themselves immigrants. Each of my four grandparents came to this country from Europe telling stories very much like these. The stories that I have heard today are very much like the stories that my Jewish grandparents told me, except that they had happened in some other country. That these events would happen in this country is a national embarrassment. And because I am a Jew, I want to single out one group here, and that is my Muslim brothers and sisters, to express my own embarrassment at this country's behavior—or some members of my country's behavior—and to hope fervently that we can take action that will make sure that this does not happen further. I also have a colleague here, Representative Al O'Brien. Representative O'Brien and I sponsored legislation that I believe answers your question, Mr. Justice, legislation that would/does make it illegal for people to train using arms to do these kinds of things, to take action, violent action against our fellow Americans on the basis of their race or their appearance. That legislation was passed by the legislature and was signed by Governor Locke, and it is the law in the state today. But that law won't be enough. Simply having laws on the books, if they are simply pieces of paper, makes them irrelevant and weak, and it makes us a weaker country to have these things continue to happen. These acts will stop when Americans—and I mean ALL Americans—make them stop. It's not our government that is going to do that. It is us. And we, I believe, are becoming more and more able to do that. Our state is relatively progressive in the way we see these things. We have immigrant communities all over our state, not just here in Seattle. As these communities become more attuned to the American political scene, I believe their strength will grow and their voice will be heard, because this is, ultimately, a democracy. But democracy itself is simply a means for these voices to be heard. It is not the goal. And the action that needs to be taken in a democracy is continuous. It does not stop. I used to think, when I was young, that these problems were problems that would be solved by my generation. These problems are never going to be solved until all people unite to solve them.

Dave Horn: Justice Smith, I was deeply moved by all the testimony here today, particularly that of the children who were so courageous in coming here today and who can't even go to school in peace. As a gay man who has spent much of the last several years working on the issue of children being harassed in our schools, I know what courage it took to come here and I want to thank you for that. The Attorney General for whom I work, Christine Gregoire, was also deeply moved and troubled both by the attacks of Sept 11 and by the rash of hate crimes and ugly incidents that were triggered by the terrorist attacks and the aftermath.

She has taken a number of steps to deal with those actions. First, she has gotten together with the county prosecutors who do the criminal prosecuting in this state and put out the word that we have a strong hate crimes law in Washington; she helped to write it and get it passed nine years ago. Local law enforcement should be taking reports on hate crimes, should be sending those to the prosecutors and those crimes against people based on their religion, on their race, should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Second, Attorney General Gregoire stepped up her efforts to get the state legislature to pass a bill, once and for all to ban the harassment of children in schools for any reason. But in particular, those of you who are being harassed because of what you believe, because of where you come from, because of the color of your skin, because you are gay or because somebody happens to think you're gay and fortunately they passed that bill this year and are working with the school to implement it. Third, we have continued to work with the Human Rights Commission to prosecute cases where people have been found guilty of discriminating against another. We cannot tolerate that in this state and we will continue to be vigilant in prosecuting those cases. And fourth, we put out a set of bills designed to protect the people of this state against acts of terrorism and to make sure that we're prepared to deal with those acts. I hope the people distinguish between different peoples' approaches to dealing with this issue. I liken it to school safety, were in the wake of the shootings at Columbine, the schools realized that what they needed to do was get the right people in the room and ask what do we need to do to make our children safer and then make a plan, take those steps and make the schools as safe as they could make them. We took a similar approach to terrorism. We asked, "What do we need to change? What steps do we need to take?" For example, we asked the prosecutors, "If some one poisons the water supply, is our criminal law adequate to deal with that? Do we have a law that fits that? Did the people writing our laws think about the possibility that some one would commit an act, not designed to harm one or two other people, but to simply annihilate a population and the answer came back no. Our laws are not very well suited to that and they need to be changed. Most people in Olympia agreed there needed to be some changes made. There were a number of disagreements for the approach to take. We had a bill, some people were critical of it, Senator Kline had a bill, not everybody agreed with that approach. We have continued to work with Senator Kline and I appreciate his leadership on this issue and in trying to work out those differences and to develop an approach. But I want you to know that we did not propose a wire tapping bill. That was not our bill – that was somebody else's bill. We do not support racial profiling. We applaud the legislature for passing a bill this year to condemn racial profiling and to demand that local law enforcement not only take steps to eliminate racial profiling, but to come back to the legislature at the end of this year and report on what steps they have taken so that there is accountability. The common theme here is working together to make people safe and we will continue to do that. I want to tell you that this event you organized here today is a tremendous contribution in that effort and I thank you for holding it.

Justice Smith: Now represent the federal government: The significant reference has been to the Immigration and Naturalization Service and so I'm going to pose a question to the District Counsel Dorothy Stefan, of INS. Our communities believe that crucial rights and freedoms are being violated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service policies and procedures, as the administration pursues its war on terrorism. These policies have resulted in innocent people being targeted, immigrants being held in secret detention facilities, hearings being conducted in secrecy, and detainees being denied the right to legal counsel. INS officials have also participated in raids on immigrant workers, such as Operation Tarmac at Sea Tac Airport. To the extent that you can or may, could you tell us what steps can be taken to change these dangerous courses of action?

Dorothy Stefan: Certainly. I thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I join you in your condemnation of hate crimes. I would like, in response to your question to suggest that the best solution is the one you have offered here today. Meetings such as this one provide opportunities to build bridges of understanding. I offer to you, just as you have asked me to be here today, to keep an open mind and to listen to you, that there are two sides to a story. That there is due process, that we do respect due process, and that we as civil servants respect the letter of the law -- the laws that Congress has passed. Should you disagree with those laws, certainly you may vote; you may write to your representatives. However, understand that we are bound. We take an oath when we take a job with the immigration service to follow the laws that are

passed in this country. That is what we try to do, and I might add that one thing that I see looking out in this sea of diversity before me is that this panel mirrors that sea of diversity to some degree. We are children of immigrants. My father was a refugee. His family was persecuted. My mother was an immigrant. So I hear what you are saying. These things are personal to me and again I thank you very much for this opportunity to listen to you.

Justice Smith: Assistant United States Attorney Bruce Miyake and FBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge Ron Nesbitt, this question is directed to the two of you in the order in which your names were called. I offer to you the same privilege as I did before, to the extent that you may or can, give us your response. Our immigrant communities are living in fear as a result of widespread targeting by the FBI and Department of Justice. The interview program and the absconder initiative are just two examples of policies that target people based on religion and ethnicity and have brought about no direct links to terrorists. Other federal agencies have also acted in disregard of due process. Programs like Operation T.I.P.S. encourage individuals to report others on the bases of unfounded suspicion. Can each of you respond to these concerns and indicate how your respective agencies can insure that all people are afforded the protections, due process and basic human dignities, accorded by our constitution. Mr. Miyake.

Bruce Miyake: Thank you Your Honor. I first want to say thank you for inviting us and having an opportunity to hear the voice of your community. It took a lot of courage for you simply to come here and it took even more courage for the speakers who spoke publicly. It's difficult to speak in public, number one, but it is even more difficult to speak about some of the issues that have been spoken about here today. As Mako Nakagawa mentioned, sixty years ago, Pearl Harbor was attacked, and as a result, in a climate of fear there was an erosion of civil rights which resulted in the wholesale internment of Japanese Americans, which included my parents. It's been difficult to sit here and listen to the criticism of the federal government. It's been difficult to hear some of the stories and some of the problems that your communities have encountered and endured. Part of me doesn't want to be here, because I don't want to be identified with that, but if we're to prevent this from happening, I do it in part as a legacy to my parents. We have to be accountable; we have to hear the effects of the policies that are being enacted. And it's important that, not only my office locally and the FBI office, but the Department of Justice as a whole and John Ashcroft and the President, hear the problems. I intend to brief John McKay, the US Attorney for this district on this meeting. And I am going to recommend that we send a memo or letter to the President and to John Ashcroft himself discussing some of the things we have had heard today. Now with respect to what we can do to try and alleviate some of the concerns around due process, as has been mentioned, having forums like this which will aid to establish a relationship between federal law enforcement and your communities to try and open up channels of communication and build trust between your communities and our agencies and not simply to have a one time forum, but to have periodic meetings with members of your community and federal law enforcement. I think that's important. It's something that we need to do. We need to periodically review our policies based upon the feedback that we get from the communities. We're not always going to see eye to eye, but we must have a dialogue. We need to hear you -- you need to hear us. We must avoid at all cost the spiraling public fear and paranoia, which creates a climate of fear, which creates some of the problems we have. What was particularly troubling to me were some of the incidents of hate that I heard. As the coordinator for hate crimes in this district I take that very strongly. And I think that one thing my office can do, concretely, is to aggressively prosecute those hate crimes. We aggressively prosecuted the attack at the Idris Mosque. I currently have a case which involves wide spread hate mail, that we are going to aggressively prosecute and it's important that we do this because the message needs to be to the community at large that we will not tolerate that. You are our community, just like we are your community. The other aspect is that both federal and local law enforcement we may need to maybe have training so that we can be more sensitive when enacting some of the policies or enforcing some of the laws and I think that's something we need to do and something I will propose as well.

Ron Nesbitt: I would like to say good afternoon everybody and thank you for having me here, especially to the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington, and Karen Yoshitomi. What I will do because we have very

little time, I will make myself available after this meeting to talk with the leaders of certain groups, whoever wants to chat with me about certain things. One thing that the Special Agent in Charge, Mr. Charles Mandigo and myself do, we go out to groups and speak to have dialogue. I've heard a lot of very significant testimony here today and it's been very moving. I look forward to continuing this dialogue. To directly address some of the issues that have been raised and to add to what Mr. Miyake has stated. On the Interview Program and the Absconder Initiative -- first off, the Absconder Initiative was never based upon religion or ethnicity. It was a program that came out of the department of justice, essentially when some one enters this country they fill out certain documents through the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Those documents basically stipulate that you are going to agree to the terms of those documents, which give you status in the United States. The Absconder Initiative essentially was that we had a great number of people that were in the country that we didn't know where they were, so the President, the Attorney General came up with this program where these people would be interviewed, where the INS, the Department of Justice, the FBI, and several other entities would go out and try to determine where these people who had ostensibly absconded where, if they were even still in the country. Secondly, the Interview Program: One of the things the FBI does is we are the investigator arm of the Department of Justice. After Sept 11 all the hijackers were dead; all the people on the planes were dead. There was no one to go and talk to. All we had was a massive crime scene. Based upon that, the best thing we could do was to get the passenger manifest and go back and backtrack and see who these people were as best could be done at this time. What was done was that every one that had a relationship with these individuals as best could be determined were interviewed. This is the same thing that the bureau does or that any investigative body would do. You have to backtrack and that's one of the reasons this interview program came about. Again I am certainly available to answer questions after this forum, because I really do appreciate the dialogue. When information comes to the FBI concerning hate crime, we investigate these things vigorously. We do them with the United States Attorney's Office and what we are really looking for is for someone to come forward. You can call the FBI, you can walk into the FBI, can write the FBI. What we are really looking for is clarifying information from the person making the complaint. From there we will do an investigation it goes into the Department of Justice and the decision is rendered whether the Bureau should go forward with an investigation or whether there will be prosecution. That's essentially the way it works. It's been very tragic hearing these things today. If you feel you've been the victim of a hate crime, then I would suggest that you certainly call the office. You can talk to me after this forum. Again, I will be available. I thank you all very much. This has been very significant and I do appreciate the dialogue.

Justice Smith: Congressman Jim McDermott and Congressman Jay Inslee, you will have the last word among the commissioners. This group has been concerned with the overreaction of government -sometimes at the expense of constitutional rights, many times in direct violation of individual rights. The Patriot Act was passed with little discussion, but with the assurance to the public that civil rights abusers would be monitored. Our communities believe it is critical for congressional members to question the path of the administration, to push for a congressional oversight committee to monitor the actions of the attorney general, and to establish a separate office of civil rights and civil liberties with the powers of a super inspector general. What if anything, sir, do you have to say?

Jay Inslee: First, I want to thank you for the chance to be here and to thank the organizer for this tremendous opportunity. I wish John Ashcroft was here actually; it would have been helpful. Before I answer specifically the question, Justice, let me just tell you that ten days ago I was in New York with the first joint congressional committee outside of Washington, D.C., actually the second in American history. We went to meet, to pay our respects, at the site of the September 11th attacks, and we also had a joint session at the Federal Hall. I felt two very, very strong, I think both American, sentiments when I was in New York that day. First, at the site of this five story deep pit where so many people died, I felt the obvious human emotions of sorrow, tremendous sorrow, for the victims of this attack. But, about a mile away, when we convened in the Federal Hall -- it was the place where George Washington took the oath of office; I got to touch the Bible he took his oath on. And, it was also the place where the Bill of Rights was adopted. And, any member of the U.S. Congress who stood there where the Bill of Rights was adopted, should know deep

in their heart that they need to stand up on their back legs and make sure that the Bill of Rights is not damaged, and freedom of speech is not damaged, and freedom of religion is not damaged, and liberty is not damaged, because of this war. I feel very strongly about that and we are going to make sure that doesn't happen.

Now, in specific answer to this great question -- I believe that the Attorney General has stepped over the line in several circumstances. That's why I have written a letter to the Attorney General suggesting that he reconsider, in at least three incidences, his position. Number one, secret detentions a year after this attack are more consistent with Argentina than they are with the United States. Number two, trying to turn our postal workers and letter carriers into domestic spies, I think, is a bad idea. And, number three, I think - as the very first speaker who talked about having a system of checks and balances - we need to have judicial rule of people in detention. I think the idea deserves the consideration of a separate office to consider these matters, but we shouldn't wait for that. Members of Congress have got to speak up. We are. We will. And, thank you very much. Take care.

Jim McDermott: First of all, let me say a great big thank you to the people who came up and told their stories. As has been said by others, the public testimony you give are very important because it lets other people know that they are not alone. On civil liberties, after September 11th when all of us were recovering from the shock, suddenly there was a story about a Sikh motel owner down in Renton who was beaten. And, I had two immediate thoughts. One was about what happened to the Japanese in 1942. The second one was what the Danes did when the Nazis said "we're going to round up the Jews." The Danes, including the King, put on the yellow star and said "we're all Danes, that's it." And, I couldn't help wonder how we were going to do this. I called Mayor Schell, Ron Simms, Gary Locke, and a number of the city council members and others and we established this Hate Free Zone. We did it about five days after this all started out at the Seattle Center. And, I want to say a big thank you, I don't know where Pramila is, but when you start something like this you never know how big it's going to get, and Pramila, you have done a tremendous job. What Pramila has done is to start with a telephone and a chair and a desk and put this thing together. And, given a place for a people to call in with their stories and begin to involve each other around this issue. Now this issue isn't going to stop today. I believe that, I voted against the Patriot Act, in large measure because of the excesses that I thought were very possible under the way it was written. It isn't Ron Nesbitt's problem. He didn't do it; we did it. And, only we can undo it. And, what I'm now going to suggest to you is, I will take this back and I hope there are enough copies around so I can give one to all of my colleagues in congress, so they can see what's going on in Seattle. But, all of you have fellow friends, and relatives and ethnic cohorts around this country, and every community ought to be starting a Hate Free Zone. It will only start if you begin to make contact and begin putting people together. Seattle already did this on the issue of the requiem, the rolling requiem. On September 11th the Seattle Symphony said, "We're going to do the requiem" and suddenly it was happening all over the world. You have the power to do that. If you sit back - I can't do it by myself. I don't know where the Somali community in Chicago is, the Muslim community, Syrians, or where any of these people are. I don't know where these people are, but you do. You know where these people are. You can reach out and start a national movement so that member of Congress are forced to have exactly what Jay and I had here. Not forced, but given an opportunity to sit in front of the audience and hear it. I say forced because I share with Bruce M that I don't want to be here. I hate hearing these stories. They make me so angry and ashamed. But, it's important that every member of Congress be given an opportunity for this kind of meeting to happen. I think there's probably a Pramila in every major city in the United States. This can be done everywhere. Let me leave you with a quote that I carry in my wallet, it's by Martin Niemoller. Some of you may not know who Martin Niemoller was but he was a Lutheran minister in Germany and he said at one point:
When they came for the socialists and trade unionists,
I wasn't a trade unionist or a socialist,
So, I didn't speak up.

And, when they came for the gypsies,

I wasn't a gypsy,
So, I didn't speak up.
And when they came for the Jews,
I didn't speak up
because I wasn't a Jew.
And when they came for the Catholics,
I didn't speak up
And, when they came for me,
there was no one left to speak up.
You and I must speak up for each other. We are all one family.

Justice Smith: A few closing words. We are America. Join me in turning your head right to left and look around and every person you see is an American. As has been said by several of the speakers, we are a nation of immigrants. We are all immigrants or descendants of immigrants, except perhaps our Native Americans who occupied this continent 20,000 years ago. So, we in dispensing justice and freedom and equality do not separate persons based upon place of origin, religion, language, ancestry. We, as the Statue of Liberty says with Emma Lazarus's poem inscribed on it, welcome persons from other lands. Those beautiful words, "Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free/The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me/I lift my lamp beside the golden door." What we have done here today, as has been noticed, can be a ripple throughout the world. We are proud of the State of Washington. We are proud of the City of Seattle. We are proud of our 38 counties, including King County. We are proud of the quality of leadership we have in our public officials at all levels; in our private citizens in all circumstances who believe as the rest of us believe that America is a great land of freedom and opportunity for all persons. At the point of which any one of us thinks we are better than any of the rest of us, we are in trouble. So let us symbolically, if not in fact, join hands in celebration of our existence. Thank you very much.

Additional Testimony

This section contains additional testimonies that were submitted but not read during the hearing.

Hate Crimes

B----

It was back in October around 11 am. I don't remember the exact day. I was riding # 7 bus to go to school. The bus was crowded some of the passengers were standing. I don't know how she started a white lady in her middle age start screaming and cursing a Muslim women (a women had hijab). I turned around to see what was going on. She looked at me and start cursing us both, me and the lady sitting beside her. I never saw the Muslim women before. The only thing we got in common was we both had our hijab. The lady was shouting "a bunch of terrorists go back to your country". Nobody dare to say anything to her. Even the bus driver didn't do anything. As you can guess, either me or the Muslim lady didn't say anything back to her.

She was keep cursing us for more than 10 min. until she get off the bus. I used to ride bus. Usually if any of passengers verbally abuse other passenger drivers force them to be quiet or leave the bus. But on that day neither the driver or the passengers said anything to stop her. They were all quiet as they were agree with her or approving her.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "the saddest part is not the brutality of the evil it is the silence of good people."

Charanjit

My name is Charanjit Bains Kaur. I am a Sikh, originally from Punjab, India. I came to the United States in January 1991 and I am a U.S. citizen. I have two wonderful kids who are 9 and 11. I came because of more opportunity, advancement and education. My children go to elementary school. A few things happened there in their school after September 11, like when my husband went to pick them up, and the kids said, "Your dad looks like Osama Bin Laden." That was the hard part—kids don't want to hear things about their parents. My son prepared a statement about our religion, and read it to the whole class. That helped because they had to know that we are not everything they are thinking we are.

Also, I would like to talk about my mother. My dad passed away in India in April 2002. I went there for a few weeks. My mom has been suffering from depression. I decided to bring her so she could spend some time with me. We applied for a visa, the US Embassy denied the visa saying, "American laws are very strict." I had all the papers and the financial support. He didn't even look at the papers. I wanted to get an explanation, I am a U.S. citizen. I said to him, "Strict to whom? To me? Why to me?" I understand they need to be strict. I am a responsible person. But I am an American, and I just wanted her to be able to come and be with me for a few months until she was better. It was very depressing for my mom and we are both still having a very hard time. I always think about this—what was the reason? There was no reason, and now I am also suffering from depression.

We know about discrimination as Sikhs. In fact, my husband was discriminated against by ARCO. They used to call him Raghead, Camel Jockey, Diaper Head, all these things. All the people working there did this. We filed a lawsuit against ARCO, and after eight days of trial, the jury decided to award us \$5 million for the damages and discrimination. ARCO did appeal to the judge and the judge gave a 13-page statement against ARCO in which he said that ARCO looked very ugly in court. He didn't change anything. This makes us feel good that our voice was heard. And it makes me feel that even though I love America—even BECAUSE I love America—I have to speak out when something isn't fair.

Karnail

I want to speak from my heart – that is why today I want to address you in the language – Punjabi that I was born in so that I can address you from my soul.

(Translated from Punjabi)

My name is Karnail Singh. I am 47 years old. I was born and raised in India and have been in the United States for the last 17 years of my life. I came to Los Angeles, CA and lived and worked there in a 7-11 for 4 years. I was robbed there and the robbers stabbed me in my back 4-5 times. With that fear in my heart, I left Los Angeles and settled in Utah where I bought a gas station and lived for 8 years. There too, the gas station was robbed many times at gun point. Once again with sorrow in my heart, I moved to Seattle, WA – thinking that it may be time for me to do a business which did not involve the same risk as the Gas station business; in which there would be a lesser risk of being robbed. Toward this end, I bought a motel in SeaTac and started living in Renton.

The terrible events of Sept 11th brought immense pain to all Americans. Everywhere I saw there was suspicion, fear and hatred in the air. Every foreigner or “foreign looking” citizen felt it necessary to be more patient and careful. I too thought being careful was the best self defense that I had as an individual. Then on 27th September one man came up to me while I was parking my car and said “Go Back to your country. We are coming over there to kick your ass.” I explained to him that I was a Sikh who had been raised in India and then became an American citizen many years back. He did not care to listen to me and said, “We don’t care. You all look the same.” He left, but I was very shaken by this exchange.

The same man returned on the morning of 19th October at 7:00 am and shouted at me “You still here?!” I told him where else can I go? This is my country! He got even more angry and agitated. He took out his baseball bat and hit me on my head and shouted at me “Go to Allah”. He wounded me and then ran away. I had to receive nine stitches in my head.

You ask me; what has changed in my life? Now in my mind and heart, there is a constant feeling of fear and that I am somehow separate from others. I am an American citizen. This is my country today and it will be the country that my children will call their land of birth. I pray to God that me and my fellow Americans never have to see the dark days of the last year that have brought so much suffering to so many. I pray for all those thousands of innocent lives that were lost on the East coast and for their families and loved ones with whom I feel utmost sympathy.

Government Actions

Abdi

My name’s Abdi and I’m recording this thing and testifying that some people who are claiming to be FBI called my house phone number and they called several times and finally they speak up and my wife picked up the phone and she said that “may I help you?” and she they asked her if they can speak to her . . . Abdi Mohammed and the guy who was speaking had a very good accent and he seemed to have an Arabic accent. Abdi Mohamed is her brother and she responded in telling them that, “Abdi doesn’t live here any more. He’s an Arabic guy. If you want to get a hold of him or if you want to contact with him you can call Fort Lewis or you can go and visit him there.” And my wife asked him if she can know who’s calling and they said, “This is FBI,” and she said “What?” “FBI?” “Yeah.” “This is regarding what?” And they said, “That’s none of your business.” And they asked her, “What language do they speak? Do they speak Arabic?” And my wife said, “No we don’t speak Arabic.” And they said, “You guys have a Muslim last name; how come we don’t speak Arabic?” “No, we are Muslim, we don’t speak Arabic we speak Somali. We have our own language. We don’t speak Arabic.” And they hanged up and my wife called me really scared about what happened and the

experience that we had, that she had from these guys. And it’s really disappointing and really scaring about those kinds of activity.

There’s another case that there’s a very Hate Crime happened in Columbus, Ohio with my cousin brother. He was a teenager and on September 7th, 2002 he went there to have a weekend party like in a teens club. And three guys get hold of him they beat him close to death. He is . . . he has suffered a brain damage and he has suffered a breaking and extensive bleeding in his brain. He is admitted in ICU in Columbus Ohio doctor’s office . . . doctor’s clinic. And just being an immigrant, being a Somali, being in the wrong place in the wrong time. After we discussed with people they said, “That place – it’s not a place for immigrants. You guys have been in the wrong place. That place is called Fat Jack and they’re very well known for those kind of activities.” And it’s really unfortunate that some kind of people do like that. They told him that because this guy spoke Somali with a friend of his and that they told him that when they start beating him they said that, “You guys came to our country and start peeing on us.” I don’t know what they mean by that, but ah that kind of language -- racial language. “You are in the wrong place,” and they beat him. “You better go back where you came from.”

He’s still in the hospital and the doctors say that this guy he had suffered a permanent damage and he might not be able to function by his own the rest of his life. He may not be able to speak the rest of his life. He may not be able to do anything. I mean, he’s not going to be complete. He will be permanently disabled and he will have a brain damage.

It’s really disappointing and it’s really sad that those kinds of things are happening. And I am not claiming that everybody’s kind of thing. But there are some few people who are really taking advantage or who are misusing the power . . . I . . . I don’t know how to say this. However, I mean it’s a really bad thing that we are experiencing as an immigrant and as a Muslim.

We came here as a safe haven to this country. We came from a place where there’s this civil war and there’s lots, lots, there’s so many people who lost their lives. Those ones who came here, which we expected we’d get safety here. I mean it didn’t, it didn’t materialize. Since September 11th things are going out of control. Things are really going bad. It’s really . . . We are experiencing a very bad things, in this country, lately.

Ubah

My name is Ubah. I’m Muslim woman. I have been in the United States for nine years. I used to work at Seattle airport. I get laid off after November/December of last year.

When I heard that the attacks had happened I really get shocked and really worried, I mean about that happened and a lot of people are dying. I really felt, I mean, I really feel bad and upset for them. After September 11th we had a lot of problems if we are Muslim in this country. I mean sometimes we cannot go outside, especially the women . . . if you go outside a lot of people, they can attack you because you are Muslim. They can see your hijab from far away. They can do whatever they like. They can say to you, I mean the bad words or they can harass you. So we have a lot of problems.

I went to airport one day. I was dropping my friend. She was having a lot of luggage and a small child, three months old, and I was trying to help out. We saw, one guy. They call skycap and he’s working at the airport and one police official. They are talking to each other. When they saw us the police official, he’s really changing his face. And he’s really angry. Exactly we don’t know what’s going on with him. I’m try to help her, to load her luggage. And my friend, she took her luggage and her child and the police official, he just stand in front of my car and just wrote me the ticket. Because some cars they are right behind my car, some in my left side, some in my front, they all are helping the people who are dropping to the airport. But I didn’t see anything, I mean anything wrong that I make. But when I try to open my car and he’s walking and coming in front of my face. And he say to me, he’s really angry and upset, I don’t know what wrong with him, and he say to me, “The reason, lady, you are, get out of the car. You are trying to blow up the airport.

You have a bomb in your car. You are terrorists. You are killing a lot of American.” But I really don’t understand what he’s talking about. I say, “What are you talking about?” And he say to me again and again. I was cry a lot. I don’t know what happened. I said, “Do whatever you like.” And he give me a ticket. And he said, “I’ll call you a towing truck.” He didn’t call me a towing truck. That police officer, I mean, he didn’t check my car, he didn’t pull up my car, he only say to me that because I am a Muslim, I am a terrorist. That’s what he thinks.

And I tell my friend story of what happened to me. I was crying, I mean, when I tell her and she’s really upset. We say, “Bye-bye, honey.” She’s going to Boston. I come back to my home. My face is very bad. My eyes are very red – I was crying a lot. I tell my husband this is what happened to me. He say, “Why are you come back home? Why don’t you go to the Port of Seattle and tell what happened?” And I say, “Okay.” I go back to the Seattle Airport and I meet the police official and to the Port of Seattle. I tell what happened. And he wrote the report. He say, “We’ll call you. We have to talk to the supervisor whose doing this case.” They didn’t call me awhile. The next day I get to Hate Free Zone and they help me a lot. I call the Port of Seattle many times and they ignore my case. After weeks they call me and we sit and talk. Right now they didn’t say to me anything. It’s very clear. They didn’t do anything fair. They didn’t say anything to me to feel better. They didn’t do anything.

I don’t know, a lot of people when you are walking in the outside, since September 11th, they see in us something bad. But I thought the people, the official people, they cannot do anything wrong, because he’s wearing the government dress and he’s doing something like that over and over. So I don’t know why we are here. That’s what I ask myself. I’m an American citizen. I have been here nine years. My son who was born here. We used to have some life, but right now we don’t have any life.

My life is not very good. I have a lot of depression and a lot of headaches, because of this problem. I do not feel comfortable. I cannot stay in this country. I cannot go back to my country, because we have war. We have a very bad war in this country and this country is another war. The life is worse at this time in this country. That’s what I believe. A lot of people they feel that way. Some people want to go back to our country. The reason we are still here is that we don’t have a separate country. We have a lot of depression, if we are Muslim. Not only the adult people, even kids they have a lot of depression. Because if they go in school, they get in depression from school, ‘cause the kids they are treating as a terrorist. The kids they don’t know what’s going on, if we are adult and we don’t know what’s going on. We don’t know is attacking World Trade Center.

I used to go to school but I dropped my school because of my depression. After the police officer harassed me I get a lot of depression, a lot nightmares, a lot of headaches. And, also, going to school at the nighttime, if you are a woman or a man or if you are a Muslim, you cannot go outside by yourself – especially a woman, wearing hijab. I also want to say there is no justice in this country at this time.

My son he was going to school. He is seven years old. He’s in first grade. Inside the school I mean kids, they bother him, because he is Muslim. I remember one day this child, his age. He said, “Oh we’re gonna attack Osama Bin Laden. We gonna catch him and we’re gonna kill him.” So my son he cry a lot, and he say, “Mommy why did they say that to me? I don’t care about Osama Bin Laden. Who is Osama Bin Laden?” He don’t know anything because he is innocent. He is a child. The Muslim child they have a bad problem.

My son he told me last week, he’s decided he’s not going back to school this year. I say, “Why?” and he says, “Mommy, the kids always bother me, because I’m a Muslim.” The one child, he’s always making trouble, and he’s telling me the teacher is lying to me and doing lots of problem. Because of his trouble, I get trouble. The teacher do not believe me because I’m a Muslim. They believe him. Whatever he say they accept it. Whatever I say is not. He say, “I am going to another school or I drop my school.” He is seven years old.

The FBI they call us many times. I don’t know the reason they are calling us. The government is focusing on the Muslim people. The Muslim people are not a bad people. I believe that. I believe that Muslim people they not doing anything wrong. The American people they have hundreds different organizations. They are not focusing on these other people – they are only focusing on the Muslim people. I don’t know why they are listening to our phones. We cannot make any conversation. We cannot talk to each other.

Suzan

A DREAM FALLING APART !!!!!

The American dream
It’s all falling apart
I don’t know where to start

Seven months have passed by
and I have not seen my parents eye’s
I refuse to say Goodbye

They are in jail,
Not for a crime
But for a small piece of paper!
They are not US Citizens
So they don’t have any rights
The right to live,
The right to pursue the American dream
Us Immigrates have no rights now

I trusted the system
I trusted America
To protect us and serve all as human beings
Not single out a race or religion
But for the pursuit of happiness for all !!!

So why do we have to pay the price
For the people killed on 9/11
Is this the answer to our problem?

So if we kick everybody out
Will we have peace?
America, who are we fighting?
Families, who only tried to live the American Dream

So many families have already been broken apart
I feel like an airplane crashed in my heart
All I want is a peace of mind
I wish my mom and dad would come home
And hold me tight.

They can take everything away from us
But Freedom, we will hide in our minds.
Free the Hamoui’s

PK

India was my native country. I belong to Sikh family and cover my head all the time. I came to the United States in 1991. Since 1991, I was feeling that U.S.A is my country. I never thought before September 11 to go back to the country of my birth. I felt more freedom, justice, and equal rights as compared to India.

But September 11 was a shocking day for all of us. I had same feelings like other Americans. I was thinking what I should do to save our country. On Sept 13, 2001 I went to buy some groceries. On my way back, two white men followed my car, they were in left lane and I was in right lane. It was little dark that men slow down their car and took my pictures. I was so scared and I can't explain in words. I went home.

When I went home, I called 911 and told my story. After this happening these types of events are happening every day. I feel uncomfortable to go outside. Sometimes, I and some family friends play volleyball at school then people honk horns and make funny sounds and give remarks.

My father-in-law is a 78 year old Sikh man. As all Sikh men, he wears a turban and has a long beard. He has been living in the United States since 1998. He walks 2-3 miles every day. He was enjoying this daily walk routine before the September 11th attack. Now he does not feel comfortable to go outside.

After September 11th, he was walking on his way and someone threw a full can of juice at him. It hit him on his back and his clothes were all wet. He was so embarrassed and came home. He told me about this incident and I called the police. The police receptionist told me that someone already called about the incident and also gave the car license number from the car where they threw the juice can on the old man. She said, "One police officer will come to your house and he will listen to your incident." We waited the whole day but the police didn't come. The police even had the car license number but they took no action. Even now my father-in-law does not feel comfortable to go outside. Sometimes he tries to go outside then people make loud noises and make fun of him.

We feel like that we have lost our freedom, and we always think this is our country, we are working hard to make our country strong and prosperous but this is sad news for us people don't accept us. They treat us differently.

M Khadija Anderson

I am a 44 year old, Los Angeles born, Scandinavian-American, female Muslim. I have been a Muslim for almost 10 years. I have three children, two sons 17 and 13 who live on Vashon Island, and a daughter, 6 1/2 who lives with me.

The Friday after 9/11, my children and I were shopping in Costco near downtown Seattle. We were sitting in the eating area having some food. My youngest son leaned over and said "Mom, people are staring at you," to which I replied jokingly, "People always stare at me". My oldest son then said seriously, "No mom, people are really staring at you." A Muslim man that works there greeted us and I noticed that his name tag was turned around so no one could read his name. A few days after 9/11 I was driving to work in Woodinville and at a red light, a man in a truck directly in front of me exaggeratedly leaned his head out of his window to turn and stare at me.

Later that month I went into a Safeway store in Kenmore carrying a refillable 5 gallon water container. I asked a box boy if they had a water machine and he said yes and that he would show me where it was. As I started following him, a woman cashier yelled at me angrily from across the store that they didn't have a machine there. I left the store.

When I was hired at the private school in Woodinville at which I worked that school year, I was told that one reason they hired me was because I was Muslim and they wanted to have diversity in their school. I was encouraged by the director and the teacher I worked under to answer questions from the children about my

religion and spoke the first week of school to all the children about basics of Islam. Parents told me directly and through the school director that they were pleased that I was there to be able to speak to the children. Directly after 9/11 I was asked to speak at another school assembly about the situation, and again I received encouragement from the director and the parents. Later, in November during our Holy month of Ramadan, in which we fast every day, two 6th grade girls were asking me some questions about fasting. The teacher I worked under, rushed up and asked to talk to me in the hall. She sharply told me that I couldn't talk at all about my religion to the children in the school.

In April, I was driving east on I-90 and was trying to get in the left turn lane to enter I-5 south. The traffic backed up quickly and I drove cautiously with my turn indicator on, frequently checking my rear view mirror hoping that someone would let me in the lane. A truck with it's headlights on came up behind me at such a fast speed that I accelerated as I thought he was going to hit me. As he came up behind me he was waving his arms and then tried to pass me on the right, but was prevented by a car in the lane. He got behind me again tailgating me so closely that I could only see his headlights in my rear view mirror. As we were now on the exit ramp to 4th Street downtown, I slowed and he continued to stay close to me. Suddenly he hit the rear of my car, and then backed off slightly. He then hit me again and proceeded to accelerate and push my car down the off ramp for about 100 yards. All the while I was braking and when my car started sliding into the traffic in the next lane, he stopped pushing my car, pulled into the other lane and sped off. I followed him for about ten blocks all the while on my cell phone with 911. I finally got his license number at which time the police met me and he had gone. The first thing the officer asked me was if it was a hate crime, as he saw me in a white headscarf and saw the Islamic stickers in my back window. I reported this to the Washington State Patrol. They brought me a photo line up to identify the man. I was never contacted again.

The next day I took my kids to a park in Woodinville that I considered safe as many families go there and it is not secluded. As we were pulling out of the parking lot, a car passed us in the opposite direction, and as we stopped at the end of the driveway, we could hear someone yelling. My son and I turned around and saw a man rapidly coming toward our car screaming and waving his arms. As he got closer I locked the doors and could hear him swearing and he came about 10 feet away from my car and said "F--- you, you rag head bit---", and then "Get out of my country." I left and noticed that there were quite a few people standing around watching without offering any help. I reported this to the Woodinville Police.

Two weeks later as I drove to work again in Woodinville, a man drove by me yelling and waving his middle finger out the window. I thought he was gesturing to a car on the other side of me, but there was none. As I got next to him at the traffic signal he continued yelling and gesturing with his finger.

Previous to 9/11 I was frequently asked questions about Islam and I would have conversations with them. Directly after 9/11 until now, I have experienced nothing but hostility and anger from people. I still occasionally have a few people ask me why I dress the way I do, or where I am from, but my answers now are always met with silence.

Yahya

It seems since the September 11th attack America has been targeting on Arabic Americans and Muslims.

First I would like to begin to tell you about the Iraqi background. We came from Iraq were there is no freedom because of the government. Then we were in the Saudi Arabia camp were there was also no freedom and the environment there was worse than Iraq. So as you can see we came from a background where there is pain, suffering, insecurity, abuse and above all no freedom. We came to America in search of a new beginning, a beginning where we hope for freedom and rights to be granted for us. Indeed we have started a new life here and we felt safe and secure we started to establish or life with our friends and families in America. Those of us who were interested in going to school would have a variety of subjects that they can study and those who wanted to make money; companies would accept them. This was our hope and thoughts about America.

From September 11th until now America has been targeting Arab Americans and Muslims all over the States. There has been thousands and thousands of Arabic American and Muslims and Iraqi Americans that has been victims of the September 11th attack. Many Iraqi workers has been laid off or fired from their jobs because they are Iraqi or Muslim. We also have problems with different departments such as School, DSHS, King County Housing and etc because they refuse to help us because we are Muslim or because they see our last name starting with "Al-." Since then we feel insecure and afraid of what might happen in the future when we go outside, go to work, and what might happen to our children when they are at school. We and our women feel whenever we go out especially the women who are wearing a veil feel offended by the way people look at them in the eyes it seems to read that all Muslims are bad. We feel the pain, suffering, insecurity, and abuse that we felt in our country is the same thing that we are feeling right now.

We hope that the media will understand that all Muslims are not bad and are not terrorists, that they will understand what we have been through in our country and not judge us on how we look.

Abu Mohamed ◊

My name is Abu Mohamed and on Sep 11 2001 I was in Sana'a, Yemen. I was there legally. After about two to three weeks, there were reports of foreign Muslims being arrested by the hundreds at the various Islamic institutes and at the different checkpoints. The reports continued and continued; and slowly but surely we started hearing about some of our friends who were being arrested. People were being held even though they had legal status to be in the country. This led me to believe that this was an attack against Islaam and Muslims.

I continued with my life in Sana'a with a wide eye. I made preparations to travel to Saudi Arabia to teach English in one of their private institutes. I was arrested in March by the "Secret Police" who verbally and physically abused me because I was a religious man. In the Islamic world a man who grows his beard is looked at with respect and honor. They are called Mutowa (obeyer...i.e. religious man). Well, because I was a 'Mutowa' they decided to pull on my beard and call me a donkey. A donkey! Yeah, a donkey! In the Arabic language to call someone an animal is of the utmost disrespect – nothing could be more disrespectful. They -12-15 men - attacked me. They put handcuffs on me so tight I was bleeding, and every time I begged them to release them, they tightened them again. The pain was beyond words. I was interrogated for 7 hours and lucky to be released. There are a lot of non-Yemeni people in those jails, in terrible conditions. The US Embassy didn't protect us, they didn't do anything for me. --I would like to add that from the gist of the interrogation I knew that the war on terrorism was a war against Islaam. -- After being tortured, interrogated, and jailed I decided that I would return to America. I came back to America with swollen wrists. I have permanent nerve damage in my left hand from what they did to me and it literally took weeks before I could comfortably wear a wristwatch.

While in America I really could not assimilate quickly because I had lived in a Muslim country for an extended amount of time. This led me into a depression; I felt like everyone was staring at me. It helped me realize what Muslim women have been experiencing for over 1400 years. I didn't leave the house hardly at all and when I did there was a high level of anxiety. The first couple of days I noticed that a 'US West' van was parked in front of my house for the first few days of my return. The van would stay in front of my house until 3 am usually. My mother's job is internet based and she told me that she never had problems doing her job. Since I have returned the situation has made her job difficult because she gets kicked off line repeatedly when she's working. When we called AT&T Broadband to complain, the first thing she asked my mother was 'are you government.' This comes from some information the customer service rep(resentative) sees on her monitor. I started receiving email viruses from people that I didn't know. My phone is tapped – I can hear the noises on the line when I am on the phone. I have heard from other people, Muslims, who have the same thing happening on their phone lines. It feels like a huge invasion of privacy – I am being suspected of something simply because of my religion! I was being followed - several times I saw someone following me and tried to shake them off, took unusual routes, and they stayed behind me. I know that sometimes I'm followed now. The FBI visited my house and asked me a lot of questions about people I met in Yemen and

if I have heard of anything strange happening here. This increased my anxiety even though I knew that I had nothing to worry about. I feared being one of the many Muslim males who have been incarcerated for no reason. People on the street would give me nasty looks, flip me off, call me insulting names. People working in some places I grew up around treat me so badly now I don't even want to go in them anymore.

I have a college degree but I couldn't get a job driving a bus from a company who is hiring even to this day. When I asked they said 'we have a reason but our manager is out and he is the only one who can tell you.' Ironically, the manager is always out or just plain disrespectful. It took four months to find a job that pays less than \$10 per hour.

Then the Seattle PI ran an article stating that there was a terrorist cell in Seattle consisting of African-Americans and Arabs. This article caused both Muslims and non-Muslims to react. I saw a Muslim get on the local news and talk about his brothers in a negative way and there had been no evidence produced. Even just two weeks ago an African-American Muslim man was asked to leave a mosque because the Mosque officials said, "we don't want any terrorists here." The suspicion is creating terrible divisions within our own family. With my long beard it is really difficult to get respect from Muslims and non-Muslims.

As a result, I cried out to local Muslim communities to promote awareness about that article. I worked with a reporter to do a story for the PI about the good that Islam has done for the Central District and South Seattle. But the paper misreported information: they said I was the center of an investigation – that wasn't true. They said my name was withheld because of charges laid against me – that wasn't true. I was interviewed once by the FBI, and the PI made me sound like a terrorist madman. The information was clearly manipulated to advance the war against Islam. Of course, I felt betrayed, depressed, and a sense of helplessness in terms of getting the truth to the public.

The truth is that I adhere to the Salafi movement, which is 700 years old and is calling Muslims to return to the Qur'an and Authentic Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). Currently, the scholars of Salafiyah have been vehemently against terrorist and through their wisdom they have been advising Muslims about certain ideologies that are the seed to terrorism in an effort to deter it. I adhere to this methodology so I feel I'm the least type of people that should be investigated because I follow those who warn against terrorists and terrorism. Therefore I believe that the war on terrorism is not a war against terrorism, it is a war against Islaam and Muslims.

After feeling the shock of having my sense of belonging taken away from me, I mean, especially after 9/11, it was really a shock after growing up in this neighborhood. I actually feel now that I'd rather go back to Yemen, where foreign Muslims are treated brutally, but it's all up front, than be here in my own home town and never know what is going to happen next, who is going to disrespect me, insult or insinuate against me next.

We are part of an amazing portion of history. Allah knows best but people may be reading about these events 200 years from now. Will they feel our pain? Will they justify these actions? Are we revisiting history? Will Muslims feel the pain that Jews faced in the Holocaust; Native Americans in America; or Apartheid with the African Americans? Allah knows best!

M---

Thanks for taking the time to read and listen to our everyday struggle we go through after September 11.

In early May 2002 I made a double payment for my insurance premium. A dispute occurred and I asked for a manager. I spoke to him and he agreed that it happened and it will be taking care of. They paid me the \$40 difference. On May 23, 2002 the agency sent me a letter regarding the dispute and requested that I have to find another insurance agent. Attached was a cancellation form to fill out and send. I called my daughter and she called them and had a conversation with the owner.

He said yes I sent her the letter to find some other company. She was puzzled because if there is no problem, then what is the problem? He said I am tired of dealing with immigrants. She said we are not immigrants. His reply was, were you born in the U.S? She said no. After that she stated that she will hold him on what he just said and hung up the phone.

When this happened to me I couldn't believe it was happening when I've been living here for a long time and I pay my taxes and do everything according to the law and I am an American citizen.

Naomi

I am not an Arab. I am not an immigrant. I do not look Arab. I am not a Muslim. But I live in a neighborhood full of Muslims. They are my neighbors. We all live peaceably together. Some of my neighbors are from Fiji and "look" Arab. I am a native New Yorker. I love my city and her people. My family lives there, so do my oldest friends. One works near the White House and had to evacuate that fateful day.

I was heartbroken on September 11th. I was struck with grief. I was heartbroken when they started to bomb Kabul. I am horrified at the thought of the bombing of Baghdad, where so many civilians have already died.

But I became afraid on the "national day of prayer", when high rhetoric reigned and the enemy became Arabs, and Islamic practices. I began to call everyone I knew and asked them that if trucks started coming and the government started to round up my neighbors, that my friends and organizational associates would come and put their bodies before the trucks. You see, I knew I would do that and I didn't want to be the only one.

As days went on and rhetoric was being tossed around, I became more afraid. As "Arab" looking people were killed in different parts of the country I became more afraid. I went to the store for my neighbors. I walked their kids to school. I held my breath and waited for those trucks. You see I am Jewish and I know about the nightmare of being rounded up. I started to have such nightmares.

Then, slowly I heard they were doing just that. Not in trucks, but one by one picking up Arab immigrants and detaining them with no charges, with not even their names released. I started to have more nightmares. I began to act. I organized a campaign for people to wear bracelets with numbers on them in order to educate people. Against the constitution, and the basic right against illegal search and seizure, the very fundamental right of due process, Arabs were being held. Not in camps this time but in INS prisons. All but 72 were deported the last time I researched the issue. John Ashcroft says he plans to investigate 300,000 more immigrants.

I am a Jew. A granddaughter of immigrants- Hard working people who helped build America. I know that 99.5% of immigrants today are working their butts off at hard and laborious jobs, often at very low pay. They too are helping to build America, paying taxes, contributing to our society. To quote James Baldwin, "If they come for you in the morning, they will come for us that night."

I have no doubt that when a government can take some people without due process it sets a very dangerous precedent for all of us. With all the flag waving you'd think that people would take time to defend the Bill of Rights. In any case, I'll tell you this- I am more afraid of my government at this point than I am of "Terrorists." And I have nightmares- not of exploding buildings, but of repression, of power abused, of people disappearing. And as a Jew, that is the stuff of my worst nightmares.

I will resist. I will help build a resistance movement. And I will take leadership from People of Color who are being targeted. Solidarity. It's as simple and as hard as that. Indeed, if they come for you, they come for me.

Excerpts from Statements of Support

American Immigration Lawyers Association

As legal representatives of the immigrant community, the Washington State Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association fully supports the Justice for All Public Hearing on September 21, 2002, organized by the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington, and affiliated organizations. We believe that this hearing will promote and educate the public on the importance of our immigrant populations and serve an important reminder of our own immigrant heritage. After the tragedy of September 11, the liberty and freedom in our country has forever changed but we cannot forget the importance of our civil liberties. We support the efforts of the Hate Free Zone Campaign and stand with our fellow supporters of immigrant rights to promote social justice in our diverse communities.

Japanese American Citizens League - Pacific Northwest District

Nearly 75 years ago, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) was formed to secure and protect the rights of the Japanese Americans. The JACL has fought discrimination and worked to uphold civil and human rights for all people. . . In a statement made by the JACL to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary in 1984 during hearings on the Japanese American wartime relocation, we stated the following: "The concepts of the Bill of Rights are the central compact between the federal government and the American people. . . There is the root assumption that the people of this country are law abiding and loyal to the institutions of the country. This is most clearly expressed by placing on the government the burden of proof in criminal cases. . . That basic requirement cannot be set aside in the interests of the security of society or of the state. . . As in 1942, we are currently facing attempts to undermine our basic principles of equality and justice for all. We have witnessed discrimination and harassment directed towards people who have been targeted simply because of their ancestry, nationality or religion. We have made a commitment to continue to serve as a public reminder to our political leadership and our fellow citizens of the lessons that we should have learned from sixty years ago. . . We support this public hearing in recognition and acceptance of our role in working to ensure that such a fundamental injustice will never be repeated again.

National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium

The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC) is a non profit, non partisan, civil rights organization whose mission is to advance the legal and civil rights of the Asian Pacific American (APA) community through advocacy, community education, public policy development, and litigation. . . NAPALC strongly supports and is extremely encouraged by the Post 9/11 public hearings hosted by the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington. . . The importance of the hearings cannot be overstated, as it will allow communities to unite and to voice their concerns in solidarity. Just as important, however, is the urgent need for lawmakers and everyday citizens alike to truly listen to these concerns and to truly listen to the stories of discrimination and injustice America's immigrant communities have been forced to endure. NAPALC is confident that the hearings will be an important step toward achieving the tolerance, equity, and the respect we all deserve.

Sikh Coalition of Washington

The Sikh Coalition wholeheartedly supports the Public Hearings sponsored by the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington. As a co-host of the event, the Coalition recognizes the historic nature of this event in promoting tolerance within our society and speaking up for the civil rights of ALL. In the weeks following September 11, 2001, minority communities saw a dramatic rise in the number of hate-crimes, religious and racial profiling episodes, employment discrimination as well as an increasing number of bias incidents. It became clear that a great deal of ignorance existed in North American society about Sikhs, Muslims, Arabs, South Asians and other minorities. The first person to fall victim to the hate after 9/11 was a Sikh – Balbir

Singh Sodhi in Mesa, Arizona. These hearings will provide an opportunity for all Americans to come together and not only voice their concerns but provide direct feedback to law makers and government officials in regard to proactive measures that can be taken to promote unity and work toward eliminating ignorance within our society.

The Sikh Coalition was formed in the weeks following the 9/11 attacks. . . The Sikh Coalition has worked towards mobilizing the Sikh American community at both the local and the national level, advocating for the rights of all Americans. These Public Hearings shall serve a pivotal role in continuing the efforts of the Coalition and other organizations to bring about awareness of key issues affecting minorities across the country. . . It is a shame, profound and real, that their ability to engage in remembrance is interrupted by a concern for whether they will be the next victim of a hate crime or racial profiling. . . The Coalition serves as a resource for all organizations and individuals as well as a point of contact for Sikh people.

Somali Community Organizations – joint statement

On behalf of the Somali population living in King County we hereby extend our cordial compliments to all the Commissioners, the audience and the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington. As new Americans and descendents from a war-destroyed nation (Somalia), we terribly feel the pain of the September 11th tragedy, and hereby extend our utmost sincere sympathies and condolences to the victims, the bereaved families and to the nation as whole. . . The Somali population living in North America is one of refugees uprooted by a decade long civil war. They are new arrivals as refugees in the USA seeking safety, security, stability and have chosen to be part of this united diversity peacefully. But very unfortunately, the dreams turned into nightmare due to the backlash of September 11 . . . Thanks to many Americans who stood with us in this time of difficulty . . . the dream of the immigrant community is alive and hoping that America; the home of liberty, equality and tolerance may accommodate all cultures, beliefs and ways of life, to remain a model society for all mankind on the earth. . . Thanks with special compliments to all well-wishers, and in particular to Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington for their relentless support.

Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation

Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation is happy to support a hearing in Seattle in which we will hear the stories of our neighbors. We are grateful to Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington and the many supporting organizations with whom we join to call for justice, equality, dignity, and respect for all. Fellowship of Reconciliation is an international, faith-based, pacifist organization which opposes all forms of violence and whose members work for a just peace. For more information, please call Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation, 206-789-5565.

Norman D. Dicks, 6th District Washington Representative

I am proud to support the public hearing held on September 21, 2002 to discuss issues that have adversely impacted individuals in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September, 11, 2001. The efforts of the Japanese American Citizens League, the Hate Free Zone Campaign and other community-based organizations need to be commended for providing the community an opportunity to hear directly from individuals in our country who have experienced unjust actions because of others intolerance and lack of education. . . Those attitudes and combative situations need to change for the betterment of our nation. Efforts such as this public hearing will raise awareness of these problems and encourage the nation to get back on the right track of creating an environment that welcomes and supports everyone.

Ralph Boyd, Assistant Attorney General, US Department of Justice

Congratulations to the Hate Free Zone Campaign of WA and the Japanese American Citizens League for convening a public hearing on the post-September 11 discriminatory backlash . . . I wish you the best in this important effort . . . Violence, threats of violence, and other acts of discrimination are illegal and un-American. Such acts are in direct opposition to the very principles and laws of the United States and will not be tolerated. Our great nation was founded on the principles of equality and freedom. We must treat one another in a manner consistent with these principles.

Organized By:

Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington

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Voices of Palestine
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Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center
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