

ALLEN B. WEST  
22ND DISTRICT, FLORIDA  
1708 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0922  
202-225-3026  
FAX 202-225-8398

6300 NE 1ST AVENUE, SUITE 100  
FT. LAUDERDALE, FL 33334  
954-202-6211  
FAX 954-202-6212

3111 SOUTH DIXIE HIGHWAY, SUITE 308  
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33405  
561-655-1943  
FAX 561-655-8018



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0922**

COMMITTEES:  
**ARMED SERVICES**  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES  
MILITARY PERSONNEL  
**SMALL BUSINESS**  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
INVESTIGATIONS, OVERSIGHT,  
AND REGULATIONS  
CONTRACTING AND WORKFORCE

February 2, 2011

Rev. Welton Gaddy  
President, Interfaith Alliance  
Rabbi Jack Moline  
Director of Public Policy, The Rabbinical Assembly  
Rabbi David Saperstein  
Director and Counsel, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism  
The Rev. J. Brent Walker  
Executive Director, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty

Dear Reverend Gaddy, Rabbi Moline, Rabbi Saperstein, and Reverend Walker:

I want to thank you for your letter and the opportunity to respond to your concerns. I respect your views and am appreciative that you have taken the time to reach out to me.

Let me start off by clarifying my position as it pertains to the Islamic faith. I am neither anti-Muslim nor anti-Islam. I respect every religion, and the Constitutionally-protected right to practice that faith in a peaceful manner.

In a townhall meeting that I held in Boynton Beach, Florida on Monday, January 31, 2011, Nezar Hamze, Executive Director of the South Florida chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), asked me a question about my stance on Islam.

I told Mr. Hamze – in a room full of approximately 400 constituents – that "I will always defend your right to practice a free religion under the First Amendment." I want you to know that I will always support religious freedom practiced in a way that is peaceful for all Americans. Throughout my more than 22 year career in the U.S. Army and working for the government, including 43 months serving in the Middle East, I worked with and befriended many who practice the Islamic faith, and have known these people to be peaceful, patriotic Americans.

Let me be clear. It is the extremist, radical element that has hijacked Islam that presents a dangerous threat to both our country and our allies throughout the world. This radical jihadist movement has no place in the United States of America or anywhere on earth. I've seen firsthand the vicious hatred that stems from their radical interpretation of the Koran, and I condemn it fully.

The problem is, these fanatics are often supported by certain groups and organizations that masquerade as more peaceful moderates. Organizations such as CAIR have long histories of supporting violent anti-American and anti-Israel terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah and the Muslim Brotherhood. These organizations operate within our borders, and as an elected official, I have an obligation to speak the truth and educate my constituency on the threat they pose. I spent 22 years protecting the United States in uniform and I will continue to do that in the House of Representatives.

My comments in regards to my colleague, Representative Keith Ellison, are not about his Islamic faith, but about his continued support of CAIR.

If there has been a misunderstanding that I have come across as someone who is against the entire Islamic faith – that is simply not true. I am very passionate and concerned about the dangers this country faces, a danger we have witnessed from the destructions of the Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, to the USS Cole, to September 11, 2001.

I certainly will take your concerns to heart, and hope that we can work together to continue to educate the American public on the importance of both understanding the threats we face, and exercising religious tolerance. It appears to me that you have the very same goals as I do – to keep our freedom intact and ensure that the foundations upon which this country was founded are never jeopardized.

Very Respectfully,



Allen B. West  
Member of Congress