

July 23, 2024

Hon. Maura Healey
Massachusetts State House
Office of the Governor, Room 280
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

RE: **Budget line items concerning antisemitism**

Dear Governor Healey:

Thank you and Lt. Governor Driscoll for inviting me and other Muslim leaders to discuss the state of Muslim affairs in the Commonwealth in May. Your interest in the data collected by CAIR-MA on the crisis facing the Muslim community, as evidenced by the rise in hate crimes against Muslims from 2023 to the present, is crucial to solving this pressing issue. I have attached our [2024 Mid-Year report on Islamophobia](#) in Massachusetts with the most recent data. As you know, Massachusetts has one of the largest populations of Muslims in America.¹ Your leadership can be a model for the rest of the country.

I write today to respectfully urge you to veto two non-budgetary sections of H.4800, the Legislature's proposed FY 2025 budget:

Neither section concerns the budget; instead, they address **solely** antisemitism in Massachusetts and no other form of religious bigotry:

- Sec. 106 requires the Dept. of Education to provide a curriculum on “antisemitism and societal bias;”
- Sec. 201 creates a special commission to combat antisemitism that, among other things, would recommend how Massachusetts can implement the “United States national strategy” against antisemitism.

¹ This source, [Muslim Population by State 2024 \(worldpopulationreview.com\)](#) gives 131,749 as the official number. However, local Muslim leaders estimate it to be closer to 150,000 because of the increased numbers of Muslim schools and houses of worship, and the increased attendance at the largest mosques.

CAIR-MA strongly supports measures to address all forms of religious bias. Indeed, protection for those who exercise their Constitutional right to worship as they choose goes to the very heart of our mission. However, these proposals do not offer protection for any other religious identity.

As documented in our 2024 mid-year report, hate crimes and discrimination against Muslims have surged dramatically in the Commonwealth, especially after the onset of the war on Gaza. We received calls from more victims of hate crimes and harassment in 2023 than in any prior year. Midway through the current year, we have almost topped that number, so it is highly likely that 2024 will be even worse for Massachusetts Muslims. There is no place for Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian sentiment, or antisemitism in our Commonwealth. Therefore, new laws should address all forms of religious and ethnic bias.

Moreover, these measures were included in H.4800 as outside budget amendments. They bypassed the standard law-making process, which requires extensive vetting and public comment. The public was deprived of the opportunity to weigh in on the merits of either proposal or to suggest improvements that might offer broader protections for all Massachusetts residents. Certainly, we deserve better than that, especially given such a core principle as freedom of religion.

For those reasons, we respectfully urge you to veto line items 106 and 201. Massachusetts has to get this right.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Tahirah Amatul-Wadud

Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, Esq.
Executive Director and Chief Legal Officer

Cc: Andrea J. Campbell, Attorney General