

Montgomery County Anti-Hate Task Force

Muslim Cohort

MEMBERS

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Recommendations

The background features a dark blue gradient on the left that transitions into a bright, glowing blue tunnel-like structure on the right. The tunnel is formed by numerous thin, curved lines that create a sense of depth and movement, leading the eye towards the right side of the frame.

Recommendations

COUNTY COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY

- **Diverse Representation:** Seek to partner with the diversity of Muslim organizations and leaders on issues of shared civic importance (confronting food insecurity, housing crisis, access to health care, supporting newcomers, building economic opportunities for small businesses, celebrating culture and more.). Avoid using the same gatekeepers from the same institutions.
- **Expanding the Structural Bias and Inequity Definitions:** Incorporate Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry and the racialized Muslim as illustrations of how the intersectional experiences of Muslims in Montgomery County when developing programs to confront anti-immigrant sentiment, anti-Black racism and structural inequities. Familiarize your networks with manifestations (and historic roots) of Islamophobia.
- **Training Civic Leaders:** As Montgomery County equips volunteer leaders to facilitate and manage programs, standing and ad hoc task forces, include a mandatory training on cultural competency that includes anti-Muslim bigotry and demographics on the diversity of the Muslim communities in the county.
- **Communication Strategies:** Ensure that materials and volunteer engagement opportunities coming from the County Executive and County Council are translated and disseminated to a robust and representative network of the faith-based and faith-aligned civic and religious organizations that serve the diverse Muslim community.

Recommendations

COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND AGENCIES

- **Reporting:** Create a **central place** where people can report HATE crimes: School, Workplace, Community. Educate the community on using that central place to report hate crimes – suggest a PSA campaign that includes staffing with community resources for intake
- **Training:** Include anti-Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry awareness in training modules for inclusion and diversity training, workplace policies that guide engaging the public, and hiring practices.
- **Training:** Incorporate cultural competency & religious literacy training for civic, business & non-profit leaders in institutions receiving Montgomery County funds and serving on task forces -- standing and ad hoc.
- **Community Engagement:** County Council and County Executive should do consistent and regular listening sessions around the county with Muslims and provide follow-up communications related to actions and issues raised.
- **Celebrate History and Diversity:** Designate and recognize Muslim American Heritage Month that acknowledges the First Muslims in Maryland and subsequent contributions across sectors since the founding of the colony.
- **Equity and Access:** Audit of the community grants to ensure access is reaching the diverse segments of the Montgomery County Muslim community
- **Communication:** Faith Community Advisory Group should be given funds for staff to facilitate multifaith communication/engagement with county departments

Recommendations

IN THE SCHOOLS:

- **Reporting:** Create a robust reporting mechanism for students and parents to report bullying and a campaign to raise awareness
- **Training:** Include mandatory anti-Islamophobia content in professional development modules and training for staff and team leaders in every school
- **Inclusive Instruction:** Teach about the contributions of diverse communities, especially those of the children in your classroom. Integrate age-appropriate religious literacy education into the English Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum.
- **Anti-Discrimination Resources:** Educate parents on the school system's definition of bullying in the school, offer examples of anti-Muslim bigotry, and ensure these examples are integrated into upstander/bystander trainings that have been adopted.
- **Subject Matter Bias:** Confront biased teaching when reviewing historic and current events that rely on reductive anti-Muslim narratives and tropes of the "good Muslim v bad Muslim" and the national security framing of Muslims as either victims or terror threats. Incorporate guidance on how to recognize and avoid reinforcing stereotypes and misinformation by reviewing classroom activities and exercises. Topical examples: Reviewing 9/11, Israel Palestinian Conflict, Medieval Crusades, Doctrine of Discovery.
- **Ensuring Dignity in Religious Accommodation:** Review US Department of Education's Faith-based Office for Best Practices on creating safe spaces for Muslim students and staff to exercise faithful practice throughout the year.

Issues & Questions

Solutions and Recommendations

Who are American Muslims?


Naming the problem - Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Bigotry

Manifestation of Bias: Stereotypes, Microaggressions and Hate Crimes

Evidence-based interventions in countering Hate and Bigotry?

Contact Theory – Multiple levels

Listening Session and survey findings



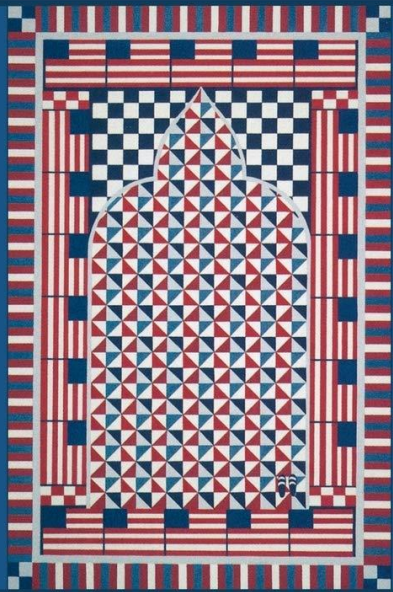
Who are American
Muslims ?

Maryland's Muslims – a Few Facts

- Islam in Maryland traces back to the 16th century
- Muslims account for 1.5-2% of adult Marylanders
- Muslims are the most ethnically and racially diverse faith group in the United States and one of the youngest
- The spectrum of **theological** and **cultural and racial diversity** is reflected in the growth of faith-based organizations across the DMV
- Recent population growth fueled by two factors: immigration and higher birth rates of Muslims * Pew Center 2021

Early Muslims - 1600s

MUSLIMS IN AMERICA



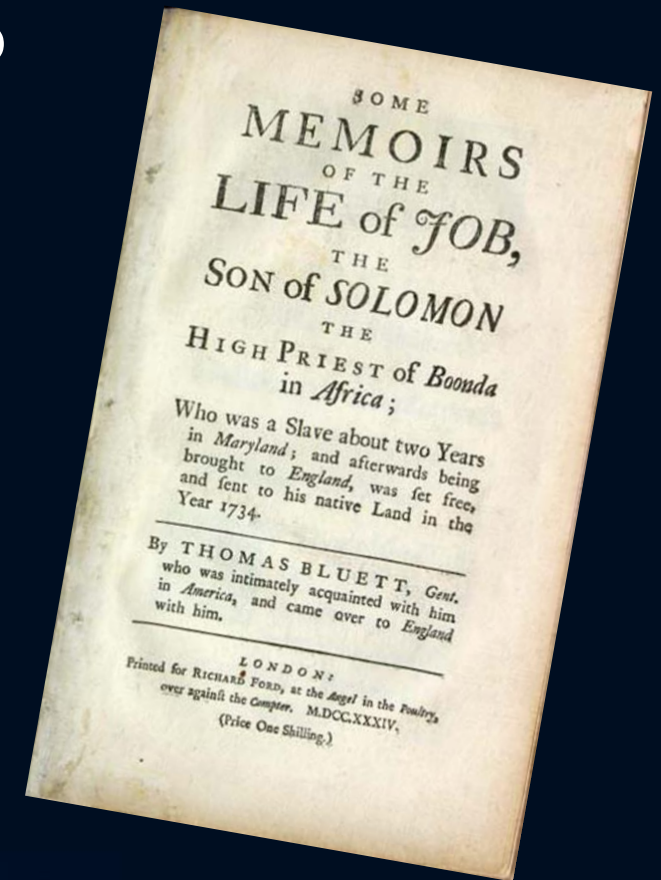
A SHORT HISTORY



EDWARD E. CURTIS IV

In 1730, Avuba Suleiman Diallo was enslaved in Bundu (eastern part of what is now Senegal).

A slave ship carried this father and husband across the Atlantic Ocean to Annapolis, Maryland, where he was sold to a tobacco farmer.



Montgomery County Muslim Organizations Reflect Growth

1970s

30 years ago, there were **2** mosques in Montgomery County serving diverse communities:

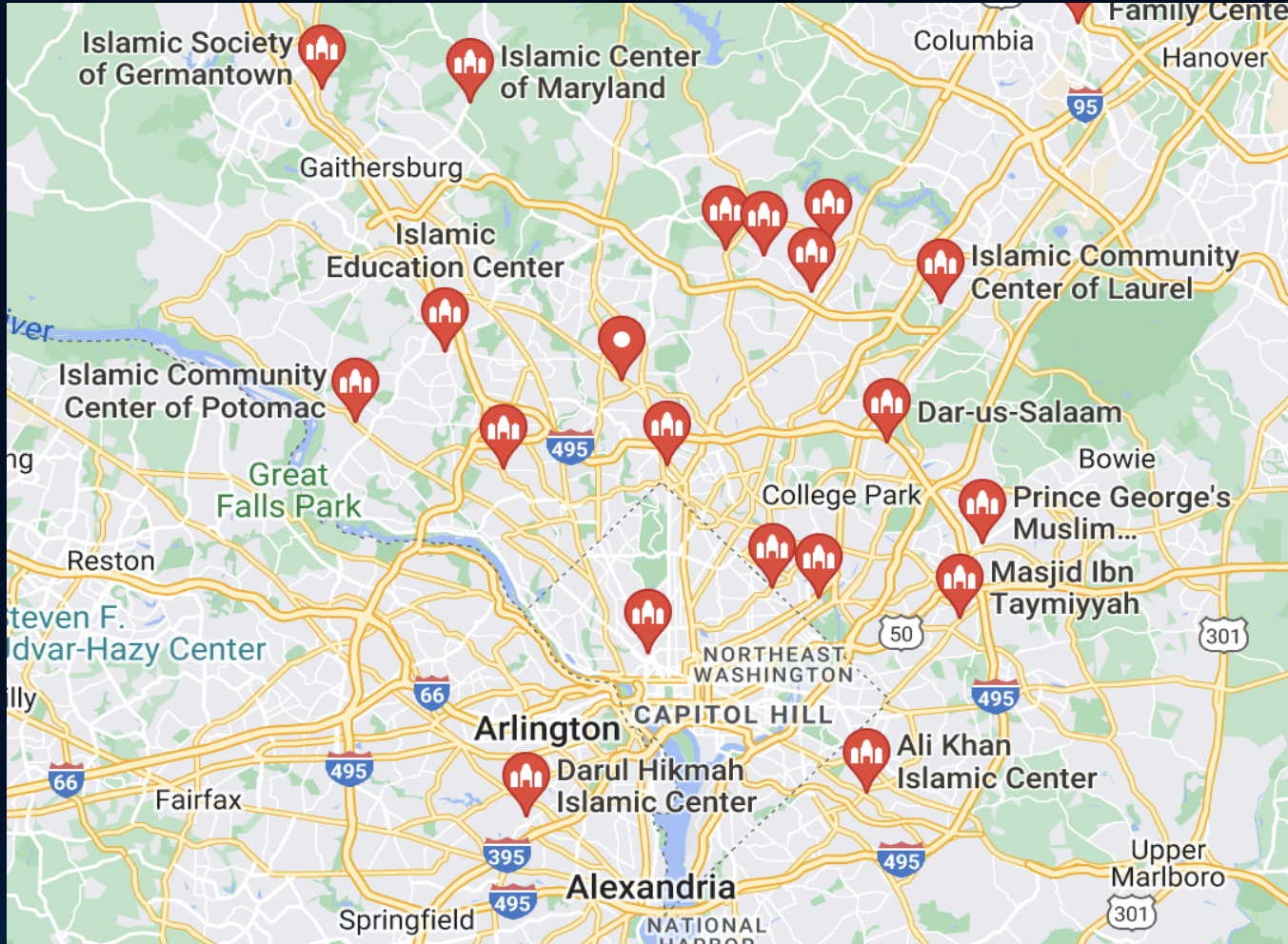
- Muslim Community Center of Maryland 1976
- Islamic Society of Washington was established in Silver Spring in 1973



2023

- **19** Mosques/Masjids serve the community
- "**Third Spaces**" which are not houses of worship but groups that offer a range of **spiritual support and programs**
- **Faith-based social service** and civic organizations engage Muslims across issues from **civic engagement to environmental action**

The DMV is home to a diverse array of Islamic schools, mosques, masjids and community centers



ISPU American Muslim Poll 2022: Who are American Muslims Now?

American Muslims More Likely to Be Young

- American Muslims younger than all other faith and non-faith groups surveyed
- 25% of American Muslims are 18-29 years old.

Compared with 8% of Jews, 4% of Catholics, 6% of Protestants, 2% of white Evangelicals, 12% of the nonaffiliated, and 8% of general public.

ISPU American Muslim Poll 2022: Who are American Muslims Now?

Only 7% of American Muslims are 65 or older.

Compared with 29% of Jews, 24% of Catholics, 36% of Protestants, 39% of white Evangelicals, and 22% of the general public.

ISPU American Muslim Poll 2022: Who are American Muslims Now?

Younger American Muslim community means greater contribution to

1. Vital Segment of Labor Force
2. Pay More Taxes
3. Active Civic Engagement
4. Grow their Families

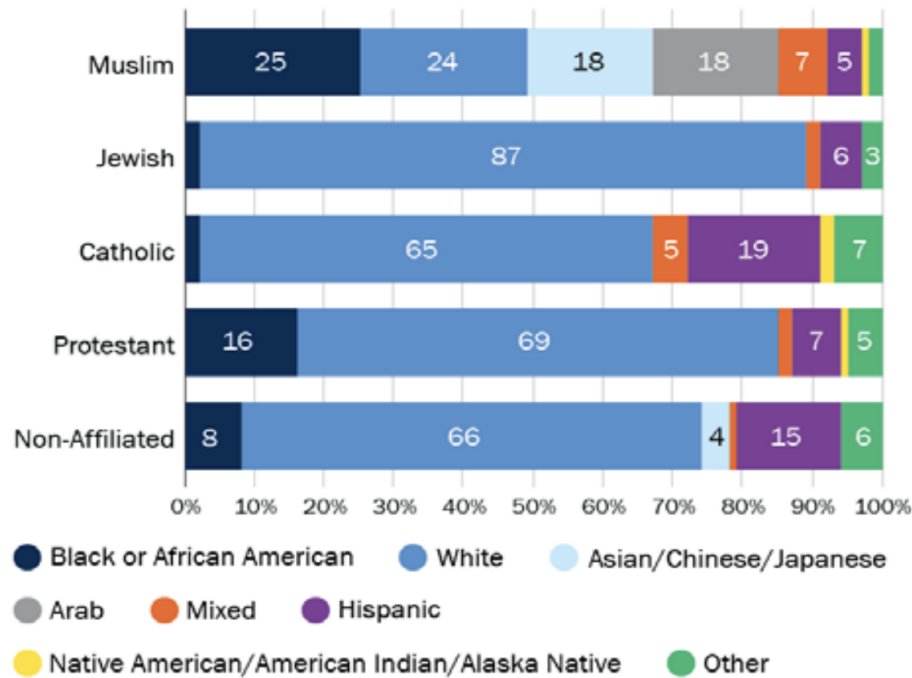
ISPU American Muslim Poll 2022: Who are American Muslims Now?

Younger American Muslim community means

- The youngest segment of the American Muslim community came of age at a time when their faith community has been targeted and surveilled.
- Many never knew an America before 9/11.

The most ethnic and racially diverse group

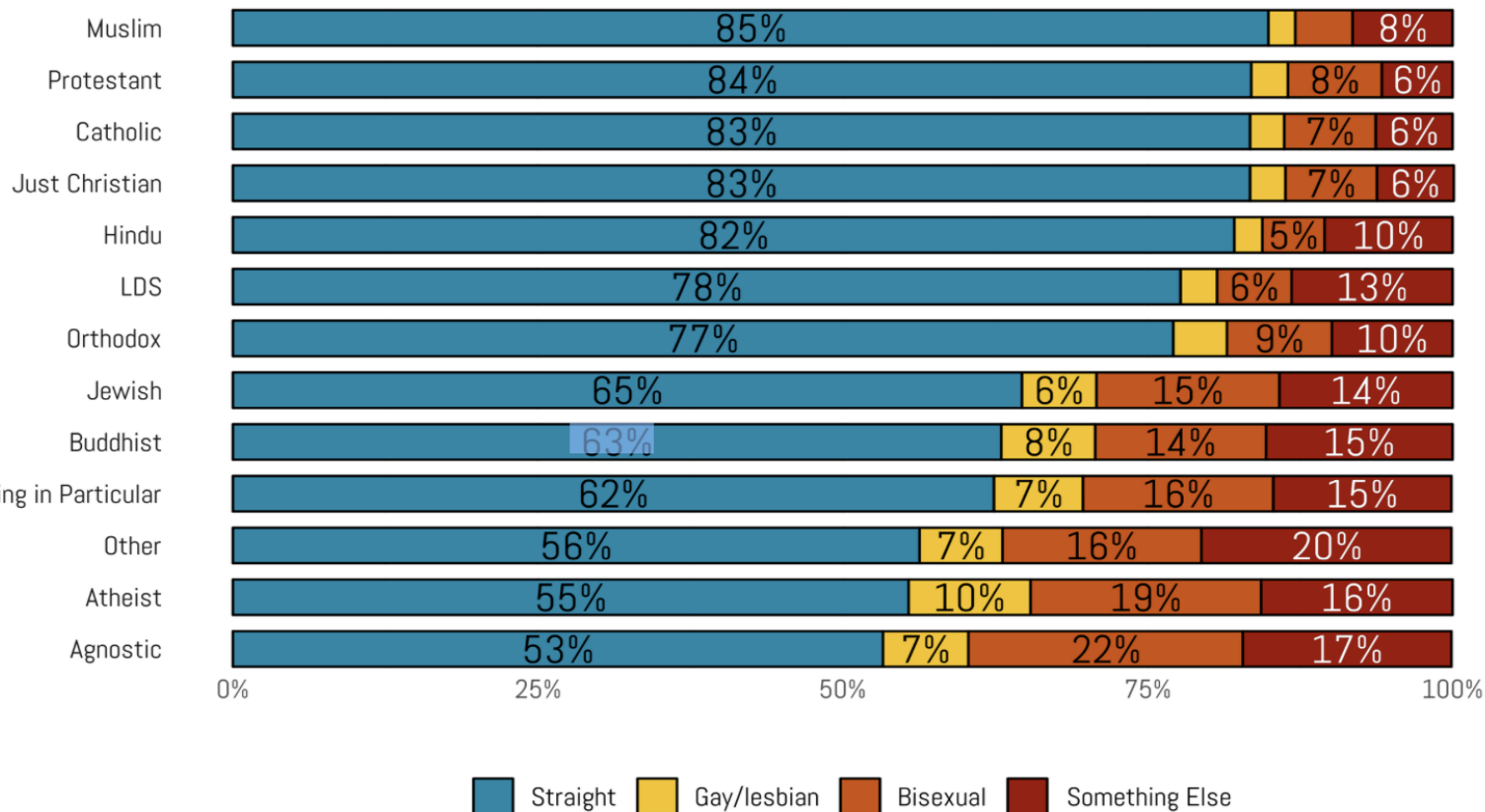
American Muslims are America's most ethnically diverse faith community.



- 1-3% of Maryland residents identify as Muslims
- Includes different streams of practice – Sunni, Shia', Hannafi, Ahmadiya, Ismaili and others
- **25% Black / African American**
24% White
18% Asian
18% Arab
7% Multi racial
8% Other – Latino, Native American

Research Show Gender Diversity Also Present Among Muslim College Students

What is your sexual orientation?



Findings 2023 National Survey of College Students conducted in 2024 by Foundation for Individual Rights and Expressions.

Graph created by Sociologist Dr. Ryan Burge depicts responses from 18-25 year olds.

15% of self-identified Muslims do not identify as "Straight"

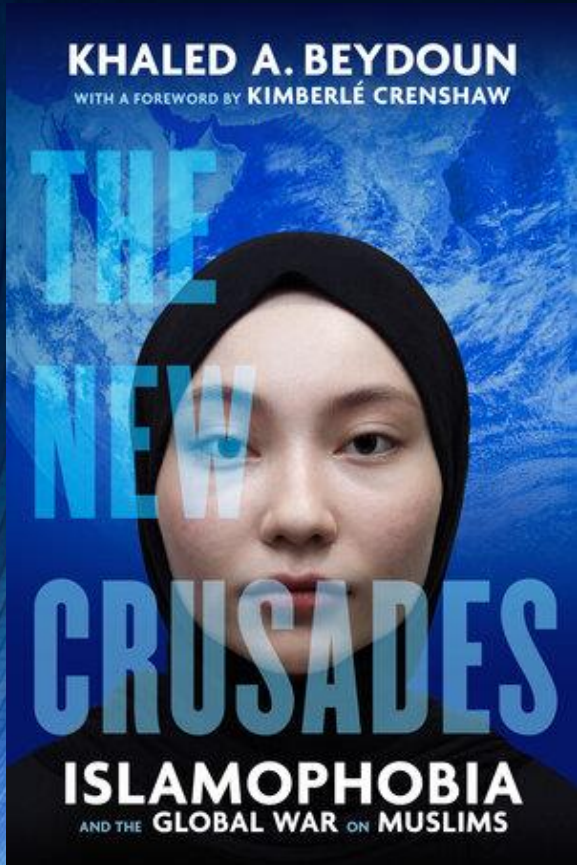
Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Bigotry

The background of the slide is a dark blue gradient. On the right side, there is a complex, abstract pattern of light blue lines that form a grid. This grid pattern curves and recedes into the distance, creating a strong sense of depth and perspective, similar to a tunnel or a futuristic architectural structure. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and somewhat ethereal.

Islamophobia or Anti-Muslim Sentiment?

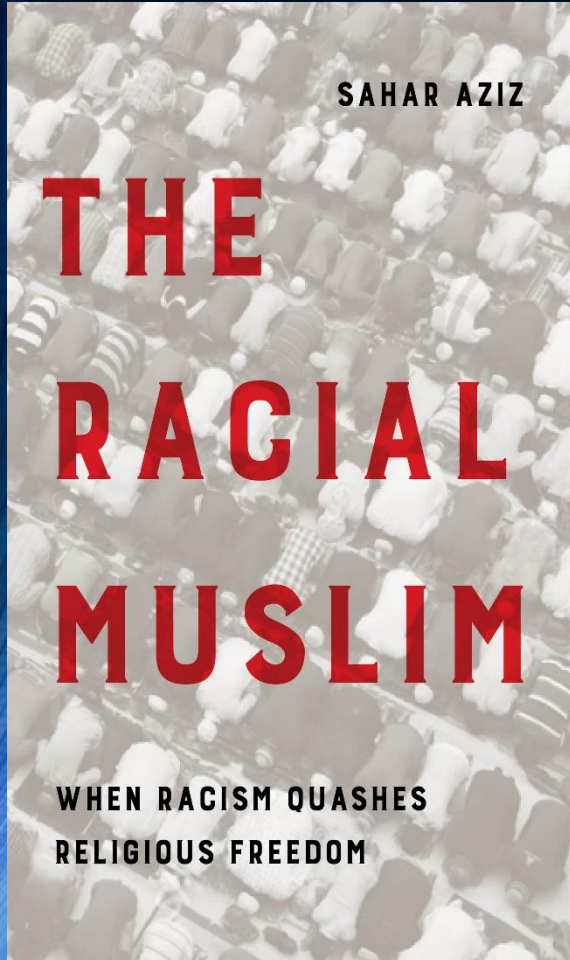
- What is Islamophobia? What is Anti-Muslim Bigotry?
- How pervasive is it?
- Hate crimes, hate incidents, micro-aggressions
- Do people report incidents? Why or why not?
- What resources does the county have?
- What more can the county do?
- MCPS – How can task force recommendations be implemented by schools, teachers and staff?

Islamophobia: Legal Systems and Structural Bias



- State policies and practices treat Islam as foreign threat
- Tax dollars are used to surveil houses of worship, community groups and profile travelers; this conveys "justified" fear
- National security lens erases history of Islam in America and minimizes Black Muslim contributions across spheres and sectors

Anti-Muslim Bigotry: Individuals Targeted



- Racialized discrimination of Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim experienced in banking, housing, workplace and civic spaces
- Negative stereotypes reflected in microaggressions
- Othering leads to extrajudicial actions against Muslims and perceived Muslims that includes bullying, intimidation, discrimination, vandalism, threats of assault, violent assault
- Contributes to a collective sense of trauma and isolation and decline in trust and loss of faith in government and public service institutions

Muslim Community Surveillance in MoCo

- State-sponsored Surveillance
Between June 2014 and June 2017, Muslim residents were targeted for surveillance in Montgomery County
- DHS Funded WORDE / BRAVE Program Targeting Youth
Recruitment of MCPS school guidance counselors, health care providers & SROs as “conduits of information”
about Muslim youth to profile as risks for radicalization

Muslim Community Surveillance in MoCo

- The Montgomery Model was tied to **Office of Community Partnerships' Faith Community Working Group** composed of faith-based community leaders, MCPD officers (specifically school resource officers), trauma-informed counselors, youth activists, and violence prevention experts all of whom received "training" to spot signs of radicalization in vulnerable individuals.
- In 2014, DOJ provided ~\$500,000 and County \$244,000 to underwrite "therapy sessions" and to manage the program.

Muslim Community Surveillance in MoCo

Outcome of funding and resources:

- Moco became a National Model for Targeting Youth. Program was featured at think tanks prominently supported by organizations like the Washington Institute for Near East Policy
- 25+ people were referred by community members, nonprofits, police officers (SROs), and public agencies between September 2013 and June 2014

Muslim Community Surveillance in MoCo with WORDE and BRAVE

Basis of referrals:

1. Homesickness
2. Suffering from "acculturation related stress, feelings of alienation"
3. "Economic stressors in the family"

Muslim Community Surveillance in MoCo

Indicators used to identify at-risk youth were statements like

1. "making friends outside my Race"
2. "feel a sense of purpose"
3. "feel accepted"
4. "learn about cultures other than my own"
5. "feeling homesick for my country"
6. "missing grandparents or family overseas".

Also, private counseling sessions with youth probed their political views both with respect to domestic politics and international issues.

Muslim Community Surveillance in MoCo

- The Montgomery Model of surveillance was not science-based and yielded no positive outcome.
- It was discontinued and has been publicly discredited.

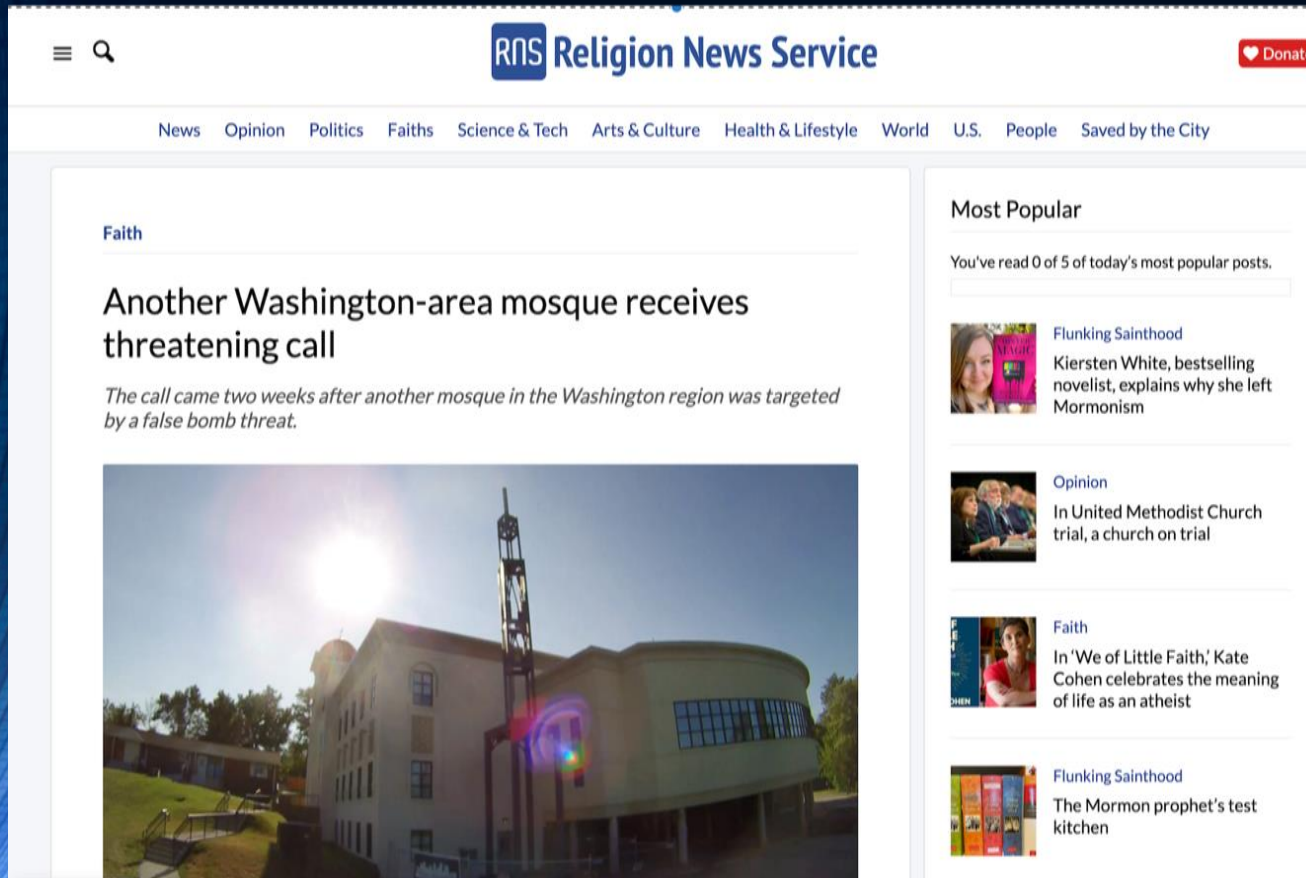
But... it created real harm to the Muslim Community

Muslim Community Surveillance in MoCo

Real Harm to Muslim residents of MoCo:

- Montgomery Model created distrust of school counselors and police.
- Residents lost trust in health care providers and mental health providers.
- Muslim community became wary of other community members and community leaders.
- Inclusion of “ideologies and values” and “political grievances” in the approach placed significant limitations on political speech and publicly voicing unpopular opinions.
- Fostered an atmosphere in which expressing dissent is seen as a precursor to terrorism, rather than a civil right.

Houses of Worship Targeted for Threats, Vandalism and Arson



The screenshot shows the Religion News Service (RNS) website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with categories: News, Opinion, Politics, Faiths, Science & Tech, Arts & Culture, Health & Lifestyle, World, U.S., People, and Saved by the City. A search icon and a 'Donate' button are also visible. The main content area features a 'Faith' section with the headline: 'Another Washington-area mosque receives threatening call'. Below the headline is a sub-headline: 'The call came two weeks after another mosque in the Washington region was targeted by a false bomb threat.' A large photograph of a mosque building is displayed below the text. To the right of the main article is a 'Most Popular' section with a list of four articles, each with a small thumbnail image and a title.


Religion News Service

News Opinion Politics Faiths Science & Tech Arts & Culture Health & Lifestyle World U.S. People Saved by the City

Faith

Another Washington-area mosque receives threatening call

The call came two weeks after another mosque in the Washington region was targeted by a false bomb threat.



Most Popular

You've read 0 of 5 of today's most popular posts.

- Flunking Sainthood**
Kiersten White, bestselling novelist, explains why she left Mormonism
- Opinion**
In United Methodist Church trial, a church on trial
- Faith**
In 'We of Little Faith,' Kate Cohen celebrates the meaning of life as an atheist
- Flunking Sainthood**
The Mormon prophet's test kitchen

Aug 31, 2023, the Islamic Society of Baltimore mosque received a threatening call while the community was preparing for an evening event, which it canceled shortly after.

Two weeks earlier another mosque, Muhammad Mosque, the oldest mosque in Washington, was targeted by a bomb threat.

Houses of Worship On Alert for Threats, Vandalism and Arson

Community Advisory: CAIR Urges Religious Institutions, Activists to Take Security Precautions After Surge in Threatening Rhetoric



Best Practices for Mosque and Community Safety



Ismail Allison · October 10, 2023 · 2:57 pm

(WASHINGTON, D.C., 10/10/2023) - The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, today urged houses of worship and human rights activists engaging in protests to take security precautions after a surge in racist, hateful and threatening rhetoric online, as well as inflammatory comments by political leaders.

CAIR is tracking hundreds of social media posts that have promoted racist and violent rhetoric in recent days, including posts declaring that Muslims and Palestinians are "barbarians" and "savages" and that Gaza should be "flattened" and turned into a "parking lot." Others have explicitly targeted Muslims in the United States, arguing that "Muslims should have no place in America" and that they should "pack up and leave." Antisemitic social media posts have also threatened the Jewish community.

side 30 of 62 English (United States) Accessibility: Investigate

-On October 10, 2023, several national and regional Muslim organizations began alerting the community to take precautions of potential violence and hate incidents.

-Council on American-Islamic Relations issued a communique following a growing number of threats received by the community following the escalation of violence in Israel and Gaza.

Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU): American Muslim Poll 2022

- 62% of American Muslims report facing religious discrimination in the past year, more likely than all other groups surveyed.
- Muslim men and women equally likely to report facing religious discrimination.

Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU): American Muslim Poll 2022



Muslims experience religious discrimination:

- When applying for a job (37%)
- When interacting with law enforcement (38%)
- At the airport (44%)
- When seeking healthcare services (27%)

Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU): American Muslim Poll 2022

Muslims Families Most Likely to Have Child Bullied for Their Religion

- In 2022, 48% of Muslim families reported religious-based bullying of their child in the past year.
- Of those, one-fifth report that the bullying occurred nearly every day.

Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU): American Muslim Poll 2022

Where does bullying come from?

- 64% of Muslim families reported facing bullying from other students at school
- 31% reported bullying from other students online
- **42% reported their child was bullied by a teacher or school official at school**
- 19% from a teacher or school official online.

The background features a dark blue field with a grid of thin, light blue lines. These lines curve and warp, creating a sense of depth and movement, similar to a tunnel or a digital landscape. The overall effect is modern and technological.

AHTF Muslim Cohort : Data Collection in MOCO

LISTENING SESSION COMMENTS

Muslim Cohort Community Listening Session

- Micro aggressions in the schools were not taken seriously
- Muslim parents involved in PTA made a key difference in accountability
- Lack of transparency in what gets resolved after incident report is made in schools
- Geopolitical events involving Muslims trigger hate bias and hate incidents
- Muslim Worship Centers and schools are easy targets
- Limited capacity to apply for and navigate nonprofit security grants .
- MD State Security grant info was not shared with MOCO non-profits
- Arab American and Palestinian members feel anti-Semitism definitions are used to silence criticism of foreign governments' treatment of Palestinians
- Reaction to Opt-out views was seen as dismissive of faith sensitivities

The background features a dark blue gradient with a series of curved, parallel lines that create a sense of depth and movement. On the right side, there is a grid-like pattern of light blue lines that recedes into the distance, suggesting a digital or data-related theme.

AHTF Muslim Cohort : Data Collection in MOCO

ONLINE SURVEY FINDINGS

Key Finding of Muslim Experiences Survey

Total 46 respondents - diverse in zip, age, race. Only 4% identified as Caucasian. 26% foreign-born. 35% US-born. 52% have lived in MoCo 20+ years.

Range between 2 statements:

I don't experience any hate or bigotry because of my identity as a Muslim.

- 38% respondents closer to this sentiment.
- 9% of respondents in middle

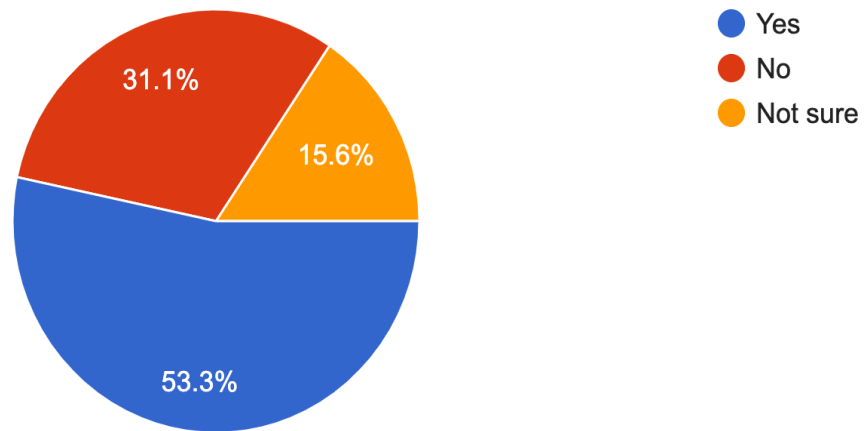
This year I feel Muslims face more hate and bigotry when compared to prior years living here.

- **53% of respondents close to this sentiment**

MOCO Muslim Experience Survey: Key Finding

13. Have you personally experienced a hate or bias incident because of your identity?

45 responses

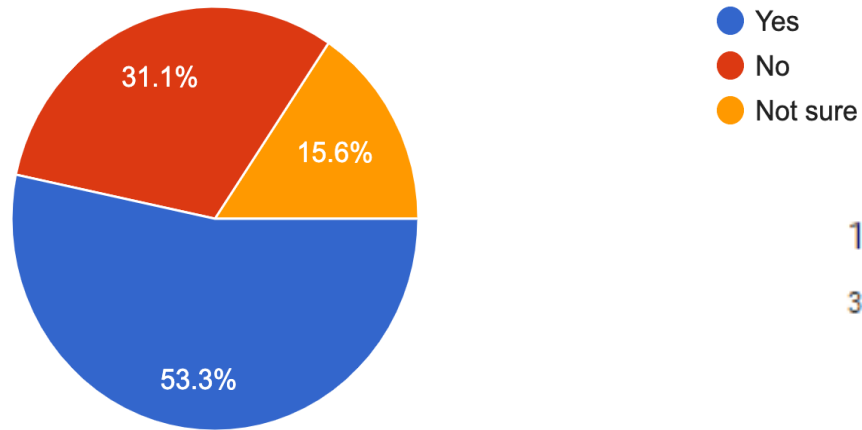


Over half of Muslims in MOCO have experienced hate/bias because of their identity.

MOCO Muslim Experience Survey

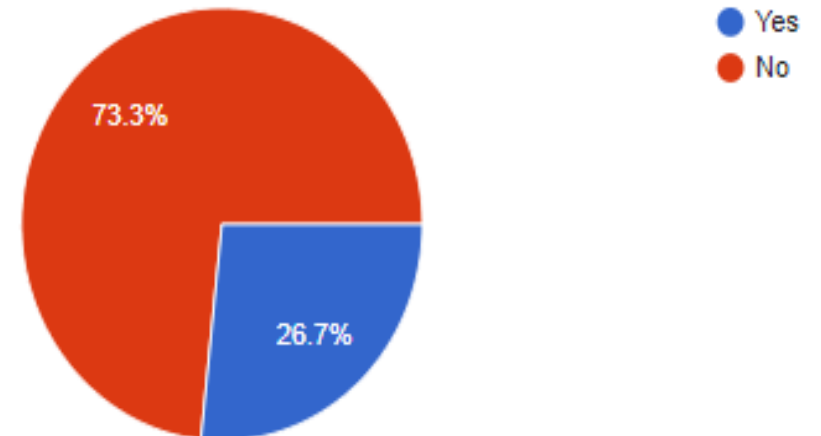
13. Have you personally experienced a hate or bias incident because of your identity?

45 responses



15. If you answered **Yes** to the question 13 above, did you report the incident?

30 responses

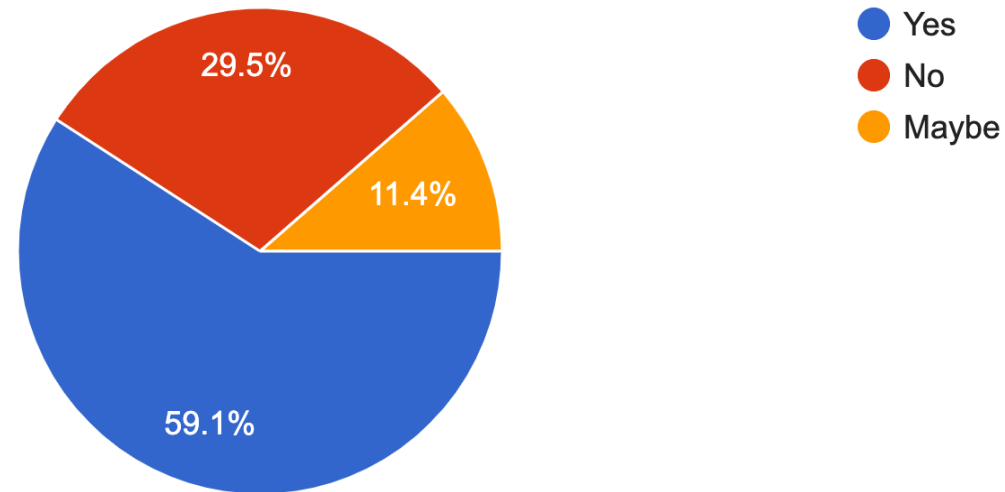


Majority of Muslims in MOCO experiencing hate/bias are NOT reporting the incident

Awareness of Hate Experiences of Others

21. Do you personally know anyone who has been a victim of a hate-motivated crime or hate motivated bias incident?

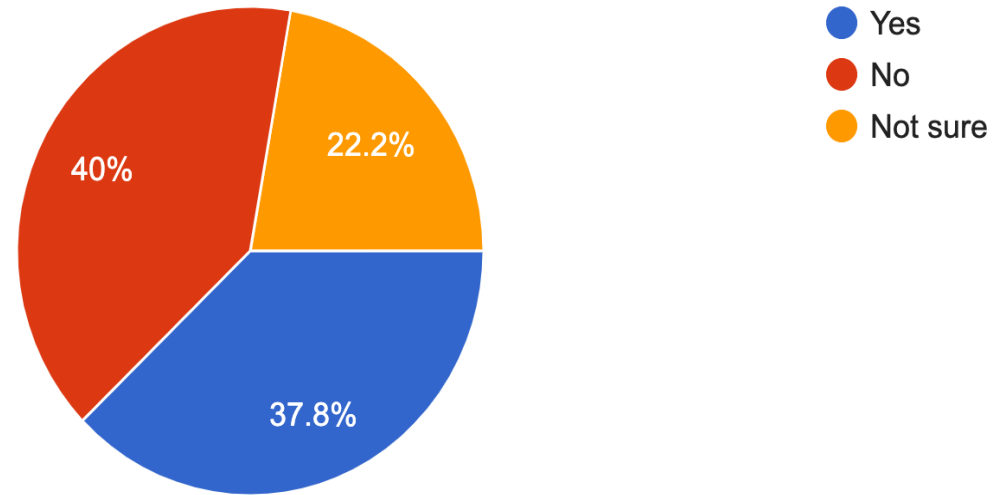
44 responses



Muslim Experiences Survey: Key Findings

12. Do you know how and where to report a hate incident or a hate crime?

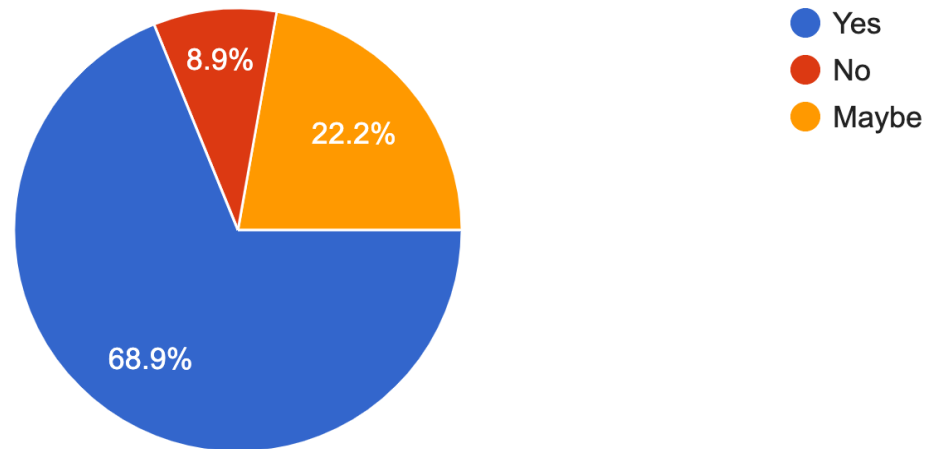
45 responses



Muslim Experiences Survey: Key Findings

7. Do you believe the County needs to invest more money and resources to improve the social climate and address the rise of hate in Montgomery County?

45 responses

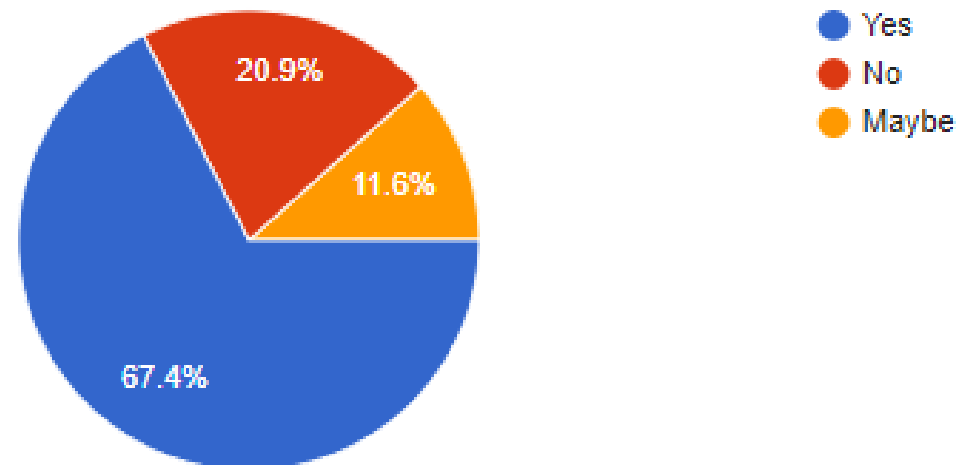


Muslim Experience Survey: Key Finding

18. Micro-aggressions are defined as subtle actions that are often unintentional, and brief verbal or non-verbal actions that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults towards individuals or groups based on their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or other characteristics.

Have you personally ever experienced micro-aggressions because of your identity?

43 responses



Examples of Microaggression Against African American Muslims

“Where are you from?”

“No. . . . Where is your family from?”

Message:

African American Muslims are not native to America. All Muslims are immigrants/are of Arab descent.

Examples of Intersectional Microaggression Against African American Muslims

““Where did you convert . . . in prison?”

“So are you a Black Moozlem . . . like Malcolm X?”

Message:

African American Muslims are criminals/converted in jail.

Examples of Intersectional Microaggression Frequently Reported by Students

“Are you a terrorist?”

“What are you hiding under your hijab?”

“Is someone forcing you to cover your hair?”

Message:

Islam oppresses women. Women are not capable of choosing their own religious beliefs. Islam is a religion of terror. Muslims are stereotyped by actions of a few bad actors.

Example of Microaggression Against Muslims

“But you do not cover [wear hijab]?”

“Do you pray?”

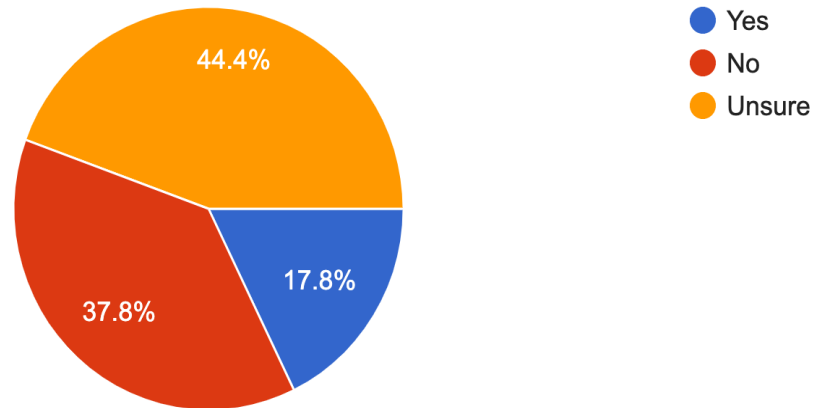
Message:

You are not what you say you are.

Muslim Experience Survey: MCPS

23. Do you feel confident that Montgomery County Public Schools are committed to combating hate?

45 responses

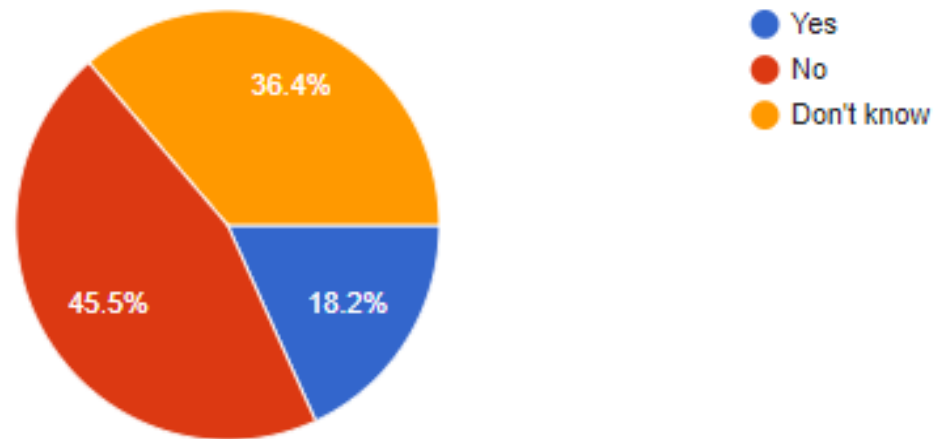


Less than 20% have confidence in MCPS commitment

Muslim Experience Survey: MCPS

25. (In the schools) - Do you believe that if a hate crime or bias incident is reported to a teacher in Montgomery County Public Schools that effective action will be taken within a reasonable amount of time?

44 responses

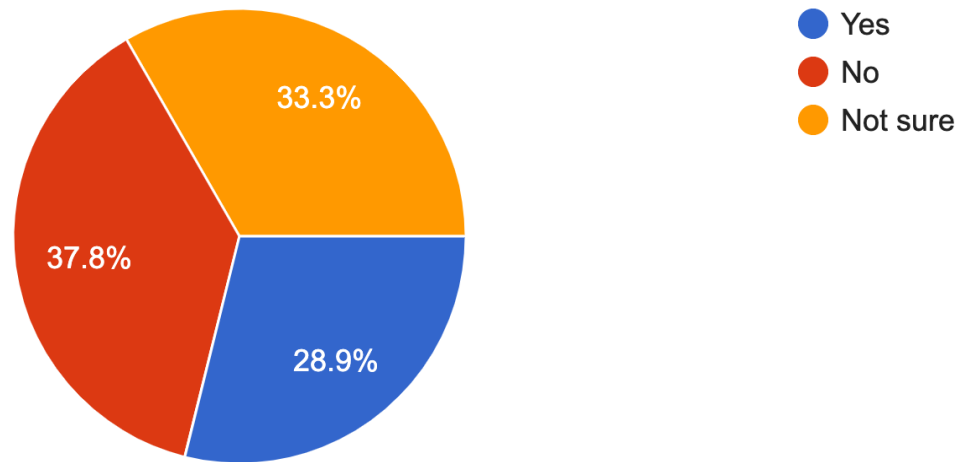


Only 18% of respondents expressed confidence that a teacher will take effective action.

Muslim Experience Survey: Police

26. (In the community) - Do you believe effective and timely action will be taken if a hate crime or bias incident is reported to law enforcement or a reporting agency?

45 responses

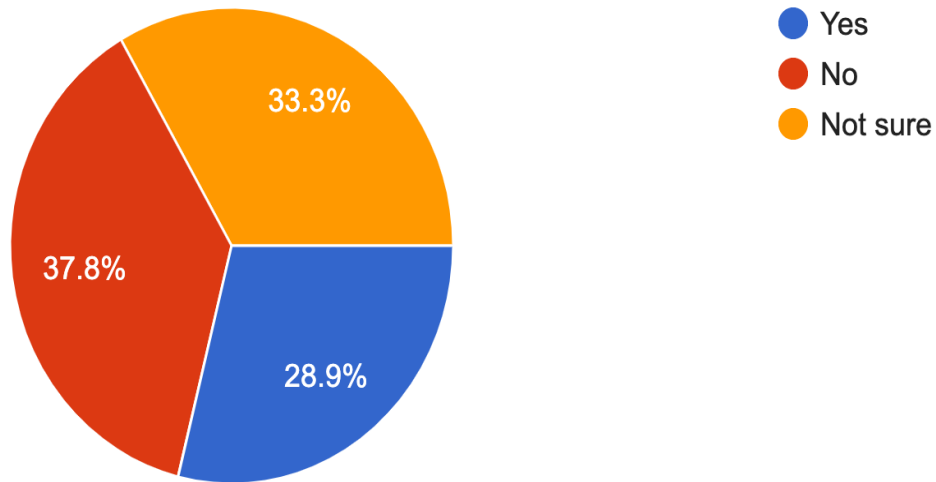


29% of respondents expressed confidence that law enforcement will take effective action.

Muslim Experience Survey: Police

26. (In the community) - Do you believe effective and timely action will be taken if a hate crime or bias incident is reported to law enforcement or a reporting agency?

45 responses



Confidence in police is almost 30%, compared to 18% confidence in teachers.

Muslim Experience Survey

Question:

In your opinion how effective are Montgomery County's elected leaders in raising awareness about the rise in anti-Muslim bigotry?

Range: 1-5

Not effective at all = 1

Very effective = 5

Muslim Experience Survey

Question:

In your opinion how effective are Montgomery County's elected leaders in raising awareness about the rise in anti-Muslim bigotry?

Range 1-5

Not effective at all = 1

Very effective = 5

Responses:

Op 1 = 59%

Op 2 = 11.4%

Op 3 = 16%

Op 4 = 11.4%

Op 5 = 2%

TOTAL 70%

feel not effective

Controversy fuels Stereotypes – Distorts Reality

Problem: Recent media coverage of the controversy around three families suing MCPS to remove LGBTQ+ books from the ELA curriculum creates a **false perception that the activism represents all Muslims** and that it is the issue that animates civic engagement.

Reality: For 30 years the Muslim community has been engaged in supporting neighbors

1. Hosting food drives and supporting food distribution to everyone
2. Partnering to encourage vaccinations in BIPOC communities
3. Offering health care services for economically disadvantaged neighbors
4. Assisting resettlement of newcomers arriving from countries of conflict

References

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Reference Links

- [ISPU: American Muslim Poll 2019: Predicting and Preventing Islamophobia](#)
- [ISPU: American Muslim Poll 2022](#)
- [CAIR: Hijacked by Hate](#)
- [Sep11, 2023 Montgomery County Anti Hate Task Force Listening Session](#)
- [Pew Research Demographic Portrait of Muslim Americans](#)
- [Montgomery County Anti-Hate Task Force Survey](#)
- [CVE - Montgomery County - Department of Homeland Security Funded Surveillance Programs](#)
- [FIRE survey](#)

Studies:

- Religious Microaggressions: A Case Study of Muslim Americans
by A. Husain and S. Howard
- African American Muslims: Intersectionality and Cultural Competence by
Shareefah N. Al'Uqdah, Sahran Hamit, **Sabrina Scott**