

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

November 9, 2006

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Mr. Ahmed Bedier  
Executive Director, Tampa Chapter  
Council on American-Islamic Relations  
8056 N 56th St  
Tampa, Florida 33617

Dear Mr. Bedier:

Your faxed letter of November 3, 2006 was received and I am most happy to respond.

I carry a copy of the United States Constitution with me wherever I go. I have taken an oath to protect it and dedicated my life to its preservation. Although our Constitution was written more than 200 years ago, it guarantees to every citizen certain inalienable rights that the founders of our country believed to be the cornerstone of our society. Two of those rights are directly addressed in your letter; they are the right to freedom of religion and the right to freedom of speech.

Mr. and Mrs. Hogan have shown tremendous fortitude by resisting the pressures of your group to retract their statements. I am sorry that Jeb Bush and Carol Jean Jordan from the Republican Party were so quick to also forget that we have freedom of speech and that the Hogans were made to feel that they are the ones who were in the wrong. The Hogans have a right to their opinion just as you have a right to yours. Mrs. Hogan expressed in her statements the views of many of my constituents, and while they do not encourage harmony in the community, they should demonstrate to you how many United States citizens perceive your faith. Your area of concern should not be focused on the statements of the Hogans, but rather upon the actions of many in your community who created these beliefs.

Americans should find it very interesting that you want me to criticize Mrs. Hogan's letter to the editor expressing her views about Muslim terrorists and her views on why county employees should not have been used to deliver and pick up the games celebrating the end of Ramadan. There were several other church events occurring that same week and I did not notice the county employees helping at those events. The basic issue here is Mrs. Hogan's first amendment right of freedom of speech.

It is clear to me, as it should be to you, that the views of the Hogan family, as well as most other Americans, have been shaped by the radical militants of Islam. On a daily basis we are reminded by the media that there are those of your faith who openly seek to destroy everything we believe in. These militants express a complete intolerance to other religions and our way of life. Most of my constituents have expressed to me their concern that Muslims living in our community have not disavowed these violent beliefs nor condemned the terrorist acts committed against our

country. Your organization has had more than five years since the September 11 attack, and even longer since the attacks on American Embassies in Yemen, Kenya, Tanzania, or even the first attack on the World Trade Center, to publicly disavow and condemn these acts.

After the September 11 terrorist attack on our country, I reached out to the Muslim community because many of my citizens were of the belief that all Muslims were to be blamed. I worked with local Muslims to bring the community together to overcome the fears on both sides. While I met many fine Muslims who sincerely do care about the United States, I also met some local Muslims who expressed vehement anti-Semitic views and some who even attempted to justify the extremist wing ideology.

You may recall our meeting on May 29, 2004, when I met with you and other members of your organization where I shared this very sentiment. You should also remember that I was invited over to the home of a prominent doctor in Hernando County to allegedly "have some tea and see how his children were doing." Imagine how surprised I was upon entering the home to find a group of eight or more men sitting in a semicircle preparing to have a discussion with me. It certainly was not the casual social event I was invited to, but not being the type to shy away from a healthy discussion, I joined in and listened.

It was suggested to me that the group needed a Member of Congress who would be sympathetic to the CAIR-Muslim view. I then told the group that I would not be the person for them due to the fact that neither I, nor my constituents, felt that the American Muslims or CAIR had adequately disavowed past terrorist acts. Whereupon you said that CAIR had taken out a full-page ad in the New York Times and several other large major newspapers. I responded with something like "Well, I am not sure the majority of my constituents subscribe to those papers."

From there on the conversation went downhill. When it became apparent to you that I was not willing to champion your cause in Washington, you Mr. Bedier, made the following statement, which was so outrageous I remember it almost verbatim. You told me that you had done research on me and found that I was Catholic and then went on to say, "Catholic priests pose more of a terrorism threat by having sex with young altar boys than those who flew the planes into the World Trade Center." I found the statement so bizarre that I asked you to repeat it and, without hesitation, you did. It was at that point that I stood up and told you that the meeting was over. I also pointed out the fact that the Catholic priests did not kill 3,000 innocent people, and that we knew where the guilty priests were located and they were not hiding in caves. I then left.

Under our Constitution you have the right to say what you believe. You will not be arrested, beaten, or made to fear for your beliefs; but you also don't have the right to tell others what they must believe. I did not agree with you and I spoke my piece before I left the doctor's home. Again, I remind you, free speech is a right guaranteed under the Constitution. I did not demand in the media you retract your statement. Several moderate Muslims have since heard about our verbal exchange and apologized for your very inappropriate attack on my religion.

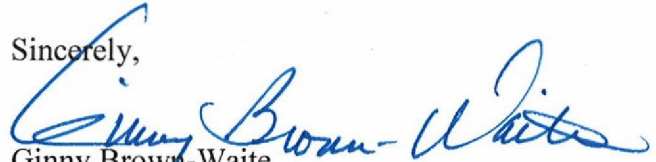
Additionally, you should know that the Hogans and I over the years have not always agreed on many issues. We have, however, always respected each other's right to free speech guaranteed by the Constitution.



By the way, my office is not responsible for the appointment of anyone to a seat on the County Commission. Your statement that my office appointed Mr. Hogan is inaccurate inasmuch as this area of our government is the responsibility of the Governor of Florida. I suggest you not only review the U. S. Constitution but also the Florida Constitution and statutes.

Mr. Bedier, in closing, I know many fine Muslims who would be well served by your resignation from the local CAIR office. Your militancy and manipulation of facts does not serve them well.

Sincerely,



Ginny Brown-Waite  
Member of Congress

GBW:CK