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WASHINGTON REPORT ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS

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Muslim-American Activism

House Members Attend CAIR Iftar

MORE THAN 100 people, including nine members of the U.S. House of Representatives, turned out Sept. 26 for the fourth annual Capitol Hill Ramadan "iftar," or fast-breaking meal, hosted by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Ramadan is the month on the Islamic lunar calendar during which Muslims abstain from food, drink and other sensual pleasures from break of dawn to sunset.

Congressional staffers, American Muslim community leaders, members of the military and law enforcement, representatives of civil rights groups, and diplomats from Muslim nations joined the House members in the popular event.

Elected officials and other speakers at the *iftar* expressed appreciation for CAIR's civil liberties advocacy work.

"CAIR is more important now than maybe ever in our lifetime," said Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX).

Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA) added his appreciation. "I do want to give a great deal of credit to the Council on American-Islamic Relations," he said, "because you have spoken up against discrimination, against religious profiling, against a great deal of the misunderstandings that have been perpetrated and cause people so much hurt."

CAIR national legislative director Corey Saylor told attendees: "We thank all the elected officials, diplomats and members of our armed forces and law enforcement agencies who took the time to gain a greater understanding of Islam and the American Muslim community."

CAIR has 32 offices and chapters nationwide and in Canada. Its members work to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. For more information contact www.cair.com.



(L-r) Nihad Awad, CAIR executive director, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), and Corey Saylor, CAIR legislative director (Photo Courtesy CAIR).

—Delinda C. Hanley