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CAIR Backs NAACP Resolution on Tea Party Racism

Muslim civil rights group says movement fails to repudiate Islamophobia

WASHINGTON, July 15 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A prominent national Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization today offered support for an NAACP resolution passed earlier this week asking the Tea Party movement to condemn racism within its ranks.

The Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) echoed concerns by delegates at the annual convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People that the Tea Party has failed to repudiate elements within the movement who use racist or bigoted language.

SEE: NAACP Votes to Repudiate Racist Elements Within the Tea Party

<http://tinyurl.com/25fyjtr>

"If the Tea Party wishes to be taken seriously by mainstream Americans, it must repudiate all those who express or promote extremist, racist or bigoted views while claiming to be affiliated with the movement," said CAIR National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper.

Hooper noted the NAACP's list of racist incidents tied to the Tea Party movement and cited similar examples of Islamophobic incidents, including:

* Extremist anti-Islam blogger Pamela Geller was invited to speak about "The Threat of Islam" at a Tea Party convention last May in Tennessee. Along with her claim that "Hitler and the Nazis were inspired by Islam," Geller has offered rhetorical support to accused Serbian war criminal Radovan Karadzic and slain Apartheid-era leader Eugene Terre'blanche. She has in the past posted images on her blog that include a fake photograph of Supreme Court nominee Elena Kagan in a Nazi uniform, another fake image of President Obama urinating on an American flag and drawings purporting to depict Islam's Prophet Muhammad as a pig. In a June 25 blog entry, Geller posted a video claiming that Muslims engage in bestiality. Despite this history of bigotry and extremism, convention organizers refused to drop Geller as a speaker.

SEE: Pamela Geller Does Not Belong on National Television

<http://mediamatters.org/research/201007140035>

* At a February Tea Party convention, former congressman Tom Tancredo seemed to advocate literacy tests for voting rights. [Jim Crow-era literacy tests were once used to keep African-Americans from voting in Southern elections.] In 2007, Tancredo advocated threatening to bomb the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina as part of his proposed anti-terror policy.

* Mark Williams, chairman of the Tea Party Express, claimed that Muslims worship a "monkey-god" and are "animals of Allah [sic]." Williams also posted an image of Islam's Prophet Muhammad with a Nazi swastika on top of his head. Tea party leaders refused to repudiate Williams' anti-Islam views.

SEE: Tea Party Leader: 'Islam Is A 7th Century Death Cult'

<http://tinyurl.com/377r3cd>

* In March, Tea Party opponents of health care reform targeted Rep. Andre Carson (D-IN), one of two Muslims in Congress, and Rep. John Lewis (D-GA), a leader of the civil rights movement, by chanting "the N-word, the N-word, 15 times" as they left the Cannon House Office Building. Protesters also reportedly spat on and shouted bigoted slurs at other lawmakers.

* Tennessee congressional candidate Lou Ann Zelenik recently claimed that the construction of a new mosque poses a threat to that state's "moral and political foundation." Zelenik says she is a leader in the Middle Tennessee Tea Party movement.

* In January, members of a Pennsylvania Tea Party group called the Valley Forge Patriots interrupted a public lecture on Islam to ask "offensive questions about the faith." (Philadelphia Tribune)

CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

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SOURCE Council on American-Islamic Relations

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