



December 1, 2014

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

It was a pleasure meeting you in Los Angeles and also learning more about you and the important work of the Department of Homeland Security. Once again, I would like to thank you for your leadership and service for the wellbeing of all people and our nation.

I understand that because of time constraints, you were not able to answer the questions raised at the meeting on November 13. Please note that these questions arise out of "not knowing" any details about the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program designated to be deployed in the greater Los Angeles area where we all live and work. Also, these concerns and the subsequent anxieties are not theoretical but real. They stem out of the recent experiences of our Imams (clergy) and lay leaders, Mosques and community organizations who were subjected to unwarranted surveillance and intense harassment by various federal law enforcement agencies.

On behalf of the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California and the many Muslims we serve, I ask that you kindly review the following and respond:

1. What guidelines DHS has prepared to identify and monitor 'religious extremism' and 'suspicious behavior'?
2. What are the safeguards to ensure the constitutional protections for religious and political expressions?
3. Is there a judicial or civilian oversight mechanism to ensure that the CVE program operates within the constitutional limitations? If yes, what is it; and if not, why not?

Having experienced "agent provocateurs", our communities are understandably sensitive to any program that may foster an environment for people to spy and/or inform on one another. We believe no community must be held accountable for the misdeeds of a few individuals within it. The acts of a few ignorant and mentally unstable Muslims must not lead to hysteria and irrationality, subjecting entire communities to programs that may be more harmful than helpful.

It is for these reasons that we ask the questions listed above and request that you respond and help us better understand the CVE program. Lastly, we reiterate once again our belief that harm to one is harm to all, and that we are committed to uphold this universal principle at all times.

May God bless you for your service.

Sincerely,

Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi  
Chairman