



Council on American-Islamic Relations Minnesota Chapter
2021 East Hennepin Avenue, Suite 407, Minneapolis, MN 55413
Office 612.206.3360 Fax 612.206.3361
www.cairmn.com

Enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims,
and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

March 29, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
Dear President Biden,

On behalf of the undersigned diverse faith based, civil rights, community groups and elected officials, we write to express our serious concerns over the potential appointment of Andrew Luger as United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota.¹

During his past term in the same position, under the Obama administration, US Attorney Luger repeatedly failed Minnesotans by denying justice to victims of police brutality and misconduct, by perpetuating purely punitive prosecution rather recognize the efficacy of rehabilitative and restorative justice, and by initiating ineffective Islamophobic surveillance programs.

Andrew Luger has a well-documented history of siding with the police in incidents of brutality or misconduct. In two high-profile cases, Jamar Clark and Philando Castile, he decided the evidence did not meet the threshold for federal civil rights prosecutions, even though both Clark and Castile were executed in broad daylight. In the wake of George Floyd's execution, this is unacceptable.

During the Obama administration, US Attorney Luger initiated the Countering Violent Extremism ("CVE") program and its local pilot, Building Community Resilience ("BCR"). These initiatives were public-private partnership that embedded law enforcement into social services, education, healthcare, and community institutions within the East African Muslim community. The framework of CVE programs was rooted in racism and Islamophobia. Under Luger's leadership, the US Attorney's Office's mission was contorted to the needs of a failed, experimental counterterrorism program whose impact is still being felt today. CVE singled out Muslims as people who are violent on the basis of their faith and BCR led to a divide within local community organizations providing needed services. By overseeing the implementation of these programs, Luger's administration continued the age-old American tradition of racism through Islamophobia.

Lugar refused to adhere to the overwhelming majority of the Minnesota Muslim Community when they rejected the CVE program and offered other ways to work together.¹

It is important to note that the controversial programs were rolled out during the trial of nine young men from the East African community following an investigation which began in 2014. This investigation was largely led by

¹ Muslim groups speak against anti-terror program. Nearly 50 Muslim organizations, in a statement released by the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Minnesota, said they are opposing the program

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/05/01/muslim-groups-speak-against-antiterror-program>

WASHINGTON, D.C.



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the US Attorney of Minnesota's office with support from local and federal law enforcement and leaned on problematic tactics such as the use of paid informants, coercion into committing illegal acts, and racial and ethnic profiling. The high-profile nature of these trials was used as leverage by Luger to advocate for the controversial program. Across the many trials the defendants were each charged with purely punitive federal terrorism aggravations despite widespread concerns surrounding the investigation and the trial.

Luger's image as an ally to the Somali community is forever marred and his role championing CVE cannot be understated. Luger's office served as chief design lead in establishing the Somali-American Task Force who created the Memorandum of Understanding that laid out the scope pilot program.²

The bad example in Minneapolis became a bad precedent for national counterterrorism work. The Building Community Resilience initiative was a pilot of the Countering Violent Extremism federal program in 2016. Along with local pilot programs in Los Angeles and Boston, the BCR program became a blueprint for laying the foundation of similar programs nationwide, despite its many flaws and poor outcomes.

His community leadership is questionable. Following the end of his term as US-attorney after being replaced by a Trump appointment, Luger moved to work for Jones Day, a private white collar defense firm, rather than put his expertise and knowledge in service of the civil rights movement or community.

Bringing back US Attorney Luger signals to our historically overpoliced and oversurveilled communities that we do not care about rebuilding trust or repairing the harm done.

Bringing back US Attorney Luger signals a desire to repeat the mistakes of the past rather than a willingness to face the discomfort of acknowledging and addressing them.

Bringing back US Attorney Luger risks permanently alienating and disenfranchising a significant portion of young Minnesotans, who we need to engage in the political process if we are to solve the many challenges facing our country and our state.

We demand that your Administration to consider one of the many qualified alternative appointees who have not engaged in overreaching counterterrorism programs, who will prioritize upholding civil rights and civil liberties and work to repair past harm or re-open the process so that others can apply for the position.

Sincerely,

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State of Minnesota Leaders –

Sen. Omar Fateh, Sen. Jen McEwen, Sen. John Marty, Sen. Mary Kunesh, Sen. Aric Putnam, Sen. Patricia Torres-Ray, Sen. Chuck Wiger, Sen. Lindsey Port, Sen. Fong Hawj, Sen Bobby Jo Champion, Sen. Jason Isaacson, Rep. Rena Moran, Rep. Carlos Mariani, Rep Aisha Gomez, Rep. John Thompson, Rep. Ruth Richardson, Rep. Jay Xiong, Rep. Fue Lee, Rep. Esther Agbaje, Rep. Cedrick Frazier, Rep. Athena Hollins, Rep. Samantha Vang, Rep. Sidney Jordan

Community Groups:

CAIR-Minnesota
Communities United Against Police Brutality
TakeAction Minnesota
MN Nurses Association
Sierra Club North Star Chapter
Racial Justice Network
Minnesota Justice Coalition
Sierra Club
OutFront Minnesota
SEIU local 284
CTUL
Twin Cities Community Agricultural Land Trust
Twin Cities Coalition for Justice 4 Jamar
American Muslims for Palestine - MN
Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment
Islamic Association of North America (IANA)
Northwest Islamic Community Center
Brooklyn Park Islamic Center
Masjid AnNur
Minnesota Deaf Muslim Community
Students for Sensible Drug Policy
MN Youth for Climate Justice
Minnesota Deaf Muslim Community
Dr. Shabaz Charity Group
Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment
Sisters Need A Place-SNAP
SDS
Filipinx for Immigrant Rights & Racial Justice Minnesota (FIRM)
SEAD
Seward Police Abolition
Release MN8
Democratic Socialist Caucus of DFL-Members

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Committee to Stop FBI Repression
Asian American Organizing Project
Twin Ports DSA, Duluth MN
Bully Creative Shop
Reclaim the Block
Asian American Organizing Project (AAOP)
Veterans Against the War
Minnesota Youth for Climate Justice
Root and Restore
Jewish Voice for Peace - Twin Cities (JVP-TC)
Twin Cities Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee / Decarcerate MN
Dr. Shabaz Charity Group
Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment
Minneapolis Community and Technical College
Sierra Club
Brooklyn Park Islamic Center
Masjid AnNur
Northwest Islamic Community Center
Muslim American Society of Minnesota
Masjid Taqwa
Blaine masjid
South Metro Islamic Center
ZACAH
Abu Huraira Islamic Center, Rochester, MN
Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center of Faribault
Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center, Minneapolis, MN
Al-Ihsan Islamic Center St. Paul, MN
Barron Islamic Center, Barron, WI
Irshad Islamic Center, MN
Al-Rahmah Mosque and Muslim Society of Owatonna, MN
Masjid As-Sunnah and Islamic Center St. Paul, MN
Masjid Dar-us-Salam, Burnsville, MN
Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center, Bloomington, MN
Al-Huda Islamic Center - East Grand Forks, MN
Masjid Shaafici Cultural Center, Minneapolis, MN
Iqra Islamic Center St.Cloud, MN
Dar Al Farooq Islamic Center Bloomington

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