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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

June 12, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan:

On Sunday, June 4, 2017, Congressman Clay Higgins posted derogatory and inflammatory remarks towards Muslims on his Facebook page. Rep. Higgins wrote:

“The free world... all of Christendom... is at war with Islamic horror. Not one penny of American treasure should be granted to any nation who harbors these heathen animals. Not a single radicalized Islamic suspect should be granted any measure of quarter. Their intended entry to the American homeland should be summarily denied. Every conceivable measure should be engaged to hunt them down. Hunt them, identify them, and kill them. Kill them all. For the sake of all that is good and righteous. Kill them all.”

This was, needless to say, a shocking statement to be made by a sitting Member of Congress and debases the integrity of this institution. To date, hate incidents targeting American Muslims and individuals of South Asian, Sikh, Arab, and Middle Eastern descent have seen an appalling surge. Earlier this year in Olathe, Kansas, two Indian men were shot after being told by the assailant to “get out of my country.” One of the victims succumbed to fatal injuries as a result of the shooting. Similarly, in Kent, Washington, a Sikh man was shot in his driveway by an assailant who told him to “go back to your own country.” And just last month, two men were stabbed to death and a third man was injured in Portland, Oregon after they attempted to stop a man from harassing two young women who appeared to be Muslim. At a time when American Muslims have increasingly become the victims of violence motivated by hatred and ignorance, our elected officials should be working to speak out against violence rather than promote religious intolerance. Unfortunately, Congressman Higgins’ blunt and insensitive comments serve only to exacerbate such incidents, and have the potential to further inflame religious and ethnic tensions that make all Americans less safe.

In his post, Rep. Higgins broadly proclaims that democratic societies, and Christianity itself, are engaged in a war against Islam – a suggestion that has palpable consequences for American

Muslims and Muslims around the world. He further suggests to “hunt them, identify them, and kill... them all.” This kind of rhetoric emboldens the interests of extremists and encourages vigilante violence, all of which fuels the anti-Muslim sentiment that already plagues many peaceful communities.

As the Speaker of the House, it is of utmost importance for you to denounce such baseless anti-Muslim rhetoric and condemn hate violence. I urge you to take this opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the United States House of Representatives to uphold our nation’s core values of religious freedom and diversity. In the wake of such terrible tragedies as the recent terror attacks in London, it is crucial that America’s political leaders send a strong and unwavering message to the world that the United States will continue to be a nation that embraces people of all faiths and backgrounds, and condemns terror and hatred in all forms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judy Chu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Judy" and the last name "Chu" clearly distinguishable.

JUDY CHU
Member of Congress
CAPAC Chair