# Safeguarding Our Shared Canvas: A Strategic Narrative Campaign For Universal Religious Liberty

Nicolina Gallo
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## Executive Summary

Islamophobia is not new. But the extreme increase in anti-Muslim hate and overall bigotry that has emerged since the first Trump administration has brought an unparalleled level of dogmatic intolerance. The fundamental deletion of Islamic history, identity, and public, civic contributions from institutional curricula and public discourse sets a perilous legal and cultural precedent that presents a direct threat to the autonomy, history, and established recognition of Christians, as well as, *all* communities of faith. The launch of a strategic narrative campaign focused on the indivisibility of religious liberty, proactively organizes and reframes this bigotry as an unrestricted, universal, danger, rather than that merely targeting a minority, legitimizing the threat it actually poses to the fabric of American religious liberty.

When governing institutions begin to marginalize the history, civic presence, charitable activity, and religious exercise of one faith, the result outlines an equal inherent threat to all religious communities. Constitutional safeguards that protect mosques, are tantamount to those that secure churches, synagogues, temples, or other houses of worship. The following strategic campaign plan introduces a proactive advocacy mobilization framework to counter rising systemic erasure of American Muslim civic history and religious autonomy. Operating on the foundational truth that religious liberty is indivisible, this campaign facilitates a multi-faith, cross-sector coalition with Christian and other faith allies by redefining the targeting of Muslim institutions as a dangerous stress test for all American faith traditions. Demonstrating how post-9/11 weaponization of charitable banking compliance, mosque zoning restrictions, and textbook censorship creates a legal and executive blueprint that could easily restrict Christian tithing, church expansions, and faith-based curricula, this campaign pivots public discourse from defensive rapid-response to united constitutional defense of free exercise.

**A Transformative Campaign From Principle Into Organizational Strategy:**
Shifting away from a defensive response to anti-Muslim discrimination and instead toward an interfaith proactive proposition, requires highlighting the stress test nature of restrictions on Muslim religious liberty as a threat to sweeping American religious freedoms. This will simultaneously, emphasize how defending one community advances the constitutional protections shared by all. Yet this, in no way, is an attempt to diminish the distinctive reality of Islamophobia, nor is it a request for Muslim Americans to justify their rights through their communal usefulness. Rather, it represents how high the stakes of anti-Muslim discrimination legitimately are, and therefore how imperative it is to address them:

The legal foundation is tangible. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), for example, broadly protects religious assemblies against discriminatory or unjustifiably burdensome land-use regulation. DOJ enforcement has addressed barriers affecting Muslim and Christian institutions alike. In Bernards Township, New Jersey, a mosque was subjected to standards and procedures not imposed on other religious and nonreligious assemblies; the resulting settlement required zoning changes affecting houses of worship generally.[1] Thus a campaign to proactively organize Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and other religious communities to advocate against this precedent, will emphasize the cross-denominational lines and demand the defense of religious liberty.

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[1] ACLU of New Jersey. (2022, January 24). *Denial of mosque permit violated law, argues ACLU-NJ* - ACLU of New Jersey. https://www.aclu-nj.org/press-releases/denial-mosque-permit-violated-law-argues-aclu-nj/

**Strategic Objective:**
Shifting anti-Muslim discrimination from a minority-specific injustice toward the recognition of a shared constitutional and civic challenge, increases the capacity of Muslim communities and interfaith allies to identify, challenge, and prevent discriminatory institutional action.

Within 12 months, the campaign seeks to:
- Establish 5 state-level Shared Faith Liberty coalitions comprised of 100 institutional partners and 150–200 activated faith/civic leaders, with a minimum 40% completing one substantive action beyond endorsement
- Establish durable interfaith rapid-response relationships connecting CAIR chapters, religious-liberty advocates, faith institutions, educators, and civil-rights partners.
- Generate measurable movement from passive solidarity to active ally participation in hearings, public comments, educational disputes, and religious-land-use controversies.
- Support concrete intervention in at least three state or municipal policy disputes, with outcomes evaluated through policy change, withdrawal, amendment, administrative accommodation, or strengthened procedural safeguards.
- Produce a modular campaign architecture that local CAIR chapters and coalition partners can consolidate without sacrificing core message discipline.

**Theory Of Change:**
CAIR's rigorous research with trusted interfaith messengers can combine with the institutional mechanisms affecting Muslim religious exercise within a legal framework. This creates rapprochement and solidarity between communities, redefining the isolated nature of special-interest anti-Muslim discrimination.

The campaign will move through four stages: Recognition → Shared Stake → Coalition → Action

First, establish the documented infringement. Second, demonstrate the shared constitutional principle without overstating equivalence between communities. Third, activate credible messengers who can explain why defending Muslim religious liberty is consistent with protecting their own institutions and American pluralism. Finally, convert recognition into coordinated civic intervention. This strategic shift is straightforward, transforming the core messaging from: *Muslim rights are under attac*k into: *Core constitutional protections are being tested*.
The ultimate CTA: We defend together.

**The Narrative Problem: From A Fragmented Defense To Shared Constitutional Stakes:**
Anti-Muslim discrimination often produces understandable rapid-response cycles: as an incident occurs; Muslim and civil-rights organizations mobilize; allies condemn it; media attention rises; yet attention eventually moves elsewhere.

Rapid response will always be indispensable. But rapid response alone can leave underlying narratives intact. Strategically, the problem is beyond any individual controversy. When Muslim civil liberties are seen as mere principal concern for Muslims, opponents can politically isolate affected communities. Allowing potential allies to sympathize without recognizing the growing threat to themselves that extends far beyond a single identity.

*Safeguarding Our Shared Canvas* changes the unit of analysis by distinctly converting solidarity from inherent sympathy into shared civic interest, by asking:
*Who* is being targeted?
*What* safeguards are being tested?
*What* institutional power is being normalized?
*Who* also depends upon those safeguard?

**Three Shared-Liberty Fault Lines:**

**1. Religious Land Use: One Statute, Many Faiths**

RLUIPA prohibits certain substantial burdens on religious exercise and protects religious institutions against discriminatory land-use treatment. DOJ describes its protections as extending to houses of worship and religious institutions in general. The enforcement record provides a clear cross-faith illustration. The DOJ has intervened in disputes involving mosques, beyond Bernards Township. It has addressed land-use barriers involving Christian churches and other religious institutions.

**Narrative Pivot:** A zoning board does not administer one Constitution for mosques and another for churches.
**Campaign Line:** *Protection for the mosque is protection for the church. Protect the principle.*

**2. Civic History: Belonging Requires Visibility**

Public understanding of American Muslims has been shaped through political debate, education, cultural institutions, journalism, and civic memory. This campaign does not highlight any unsupported claims or single out a specific curriculum decision as an automatic binding legal precedent for censoring another religion. Rather, it relies on the foundational argument of institutional norms and public legitimacy. When the civic history of one community is targeted for omission, becomes distorted, or is reduce to controversy, pluralistic education itself is weakened.

**Narrative Pivot:** Religious literacy is not synonymous with religious endorsement. Understanding Muslim historical contributions, providing tolerance for identity, and allowing for community agency does not diminish the traditional history of another. It is simply an accurate civic record that legally allows for both.
**Campaign Line:** America's story is less American when Americans are edited out of it.

**3. Charitable Autonomy: Security Without Collective Suspicion**

Muslim charitable and humanitarian organizations have operated for decades, both prior to, and in the aftermath of, 9/11. This campaign treats the financial component as a research work-stream prior to any comparative legal claims, to ensure that documented regulatory burdens are distinguished from broader assertions about future restrictions on Christian organizations. Still, the narrative principle, is clear: Legitimate security and compliance requirements should be evidence-based, consistently administered, transparent, and compatible with constitutional protections.

**Narrative Pivot:** Religious charity should be governed by law—not collective suspicion.
**Campaign Line:** Compliance cannot be a proxy for religious profiling.

**Strategic Message Architecture**

**The Master Narrative:**

Religious liberty is not a collection of separate privileges. It shares a constitutional infrastructure, thus when discriminatory institutions test the boundaries against one community, every American has an interest in whether those safeguards hold. This campaign maintains one factual backbone while sustaining adaptable entry points for various constituencies:

**Muslim Communities**

**Frame:** Agency, belonging and equal citizenship.
Muslim Americans should not have to prove they deserve religious protections, or civil rights. Their liberties stand independently. Expanding the coalition beyond the political constituency will defend those liberties.
**CTA:** Document. Organize. Lead. Build resilient local alliances before the next crisis.

**Christian and Other Faith Partners**

**Frame:** Indivisible Liberty.

The most resolute religious-freedom comes from a system with protections that remain meaningful even when applied to communities outside one's own tradition.
**CTA:** Sign the Shared Faith Liberty commitment and designate institutional representatives for local advocacy and rapid-response coordination.

**Media and Public Audiences**
**Frame:** The Civic Stress Test.
Moving coverage beyond episodic controversy and toward underlying institutional questions will highlight the reality of American religious liberty within a paradigm of normalized administrative discrimination.
**CTA:** Follow the precedent, rather than the controversy.

**Civil-Rights and Legal Partners:**
**Frame:** Shared infrastructure.
Identifying recurring mechanisms within land use, administrative discretion, unequal treatment, and institutional exclusion will connect the individual controversies to the impact on universal protections governing all religious communities.
**CTA:** Build an interfaith early-warning and referral network.

**<u>Campaign Architecture</u>**
**Phase I - Building The Evidence And Coalition (Months 1–2)**

Establishing the *Shared Canvas Working Group*, will involve convening CAIR chapter representatives, Muslim community leaders, Christian and other interfaith partners, civil-rights attorneys, religious-land-use specialists, educators, researchers, and community organizers.

Producing the evidence pillar will require developing a precedent of erasure, that can demonstrate how religious liberty shares the architecture of American free exercise. This requires separating documented cases from emerging risks and identifying state-specific intervention opportunities.

Mapping the narrative landscape, will involve using social listening, media analytics, chapter intelligence, community surveys, and qualitative interviews to identify dominant frames, hostile narratives, amenable audiences, credible messengers, and geographic hotspots.

Building the rapid-response infrastructure, necessitates establishing chapter escalation protocols, partner contact trees, approval workflows, legal-review pathways, adaptable templates, spokesperson rosters, and shared monitoring dashboards.

**Phase II - Launching The Shared-Liberty Frame (Months 3–4)**
The National Interfaith Launch will introduce #SharedFaithLiberty coordinated between national and local Muslim leaders with events alongside Christian, Jewish, and other religious-liberty partners.

Deploying messenger pairing, will require matching CAIR advocates with locally credible non-Muslim faith leaders for press interviews, public testimony, op-eds, educational events, and digital storytelling.

To create the Shared Canvas toolkit, supply chapters and partners will need to design modular talking points, fact sheets, graphics, sample sermons/reflections, newsletter language, social assets, FAQs, rapid-response templates, local-government testimony, and measurement guidance.

Activating owned media will require deploying segmented emails, with social, chapter, partner, and community communications that direct audiences toward specific actions rather than simple awareness.

**Phase III — Converting The Narrative Into Civic Action (Months 5–6)**
The Shared-Liberty Intervention will activate coalition partners when documented religious-liberty disputes emerge, prioritizing interventions where cross-faith participation can materially alter public understanding or institutional decision-making.

The Religious Land-Use Early Warning Network will connect CAIR chapters with legal and interfaith partners able to identify potentially discriminatory land-use actions early enough for constructive intervention.

Education advocacy will equip diverse faith partners to demand accurate, constitutionally appropriate religious literacy and act against discriminatory exclusion of Muslim history.

Policy engagement will happen where research identifies substantiated regulatory problems, by convening affected organizations, legal specialists, and cross-faith partners around evidence-based reforms.

The objective is not performative solidarity, it is coordinated power.

**Rapid-Response Protocol:**
A narrative campaign's credibility can be measured by how well it performs under pressure. Given this fact, the rapid-response protocol for *Safeguarding Our Shared Canvas* when a high-risk incident emerges, is as follows:

**0–2 Hours: Verify**
Confirm facts, jurisdiction, affected community, legal context, source reliability, narrative velocity, and immediate risk.

**2–6 Hours: Align**
Establish message spine, legal boundaries, stakeholder roles, spokespersons, approval chain, primary CTA, and ally activation.

**6–12 Hours: Deploy**
Release modular press, social, email, partner, and chapter assets. Activate credible cross-faith messengers without displacing affected Muslim voices.

**12–72 Hours: Escalate**
Track media framing, misinformation, stakeholder participation, institutional response, digital engagement, and action conversion. Adapt tactics while preserving factual consistency.

**Post-Action: Learn**
Document what moved, what failed, which messengers converted audiences, which assets chapters actually used, and what research gaps surfaced. Subsequently, feed these analytics directly into CAIR's research and campaign infrastructure.

**Impact Framework**
**Measure Power, Not Noise**
Organic impressions are inadequate. This campaign legitimately evaluates whether communications change framing, relationships, participation, and institutional outcomes.

The narrative shift will establish a baseline media-content analysis and track growth in coverage that connects Muslim religious-liberty controversies with broader free-exercise or pluralism implications.

Coalition depth will target 100+ participating non-Muslim institutions and organizational partners for the initial multi-state deployment, distinguishing signatures from meaningful advocacy.

Activation of allies should be measured on the number of coalition partners moving from endorsement to testimony, public comment, media participation, constituent outreach, educational programming, or direct institutional engagement.

Rapid-response readiness will target verified coalition deployments within 72 hours for qualifying high-priority religious-liberty disputes.

Chapter replications will be analyzed by tracking toolkit adoption, localization, asset utilization, response time, conversion, and chapter feedback.

Institutional outcomes should document policy amendments, administrative accommodations, preserved protections, strengthening procedures, coalition access, and other attributable outcomes rather than merely claiming causation without demonstration.

Learning loops require post-campaign reviews to convert field experience into updated messaging, research questions, templates, training, and best practices.

**Governance And Safeguards:**

A campaign focus on pluralism must practice it.

Muslim agency will always remain central, with cross-faith framing expanding the constituency defending Muslim rights. This model does *not* make those rights contingent upon potential harm to Christians.

Evidence will always come before analogy. Distinguishing documented precedent, analogous institutional mechanisms, plausible risk, and prediction, is vital.

There are no false equivalents. Other forms of bigotry and differing discrimination affecting outside communities will not be undermined. Shared constitutional interests do not erase those differences.

Legal review is mandated before any legal claims. CAIR counsel should validate statutory, regulatory, constitutional, and case-specific language prior to publication.

Local intelligence is needed prior to national activation. Chapters and affected communities will need to inform whether a national intervention is helpful or instead complicates the local strategy.

Measure should contribute, not manufacture attribution. Campaign reporting should distinguish between correlation, contribution, and demonstrable policy impact.

**The Narrative Shift**
**Old Framework:** *Muslims Are Facing Another Episode Of Discrimination.*
**The Transition Frame:** *The Mechanism Targeting Muslim Civic And Religious Life Implicates Protections Shared Across Faith Traditions.*
**New Frame:** *Religious Liberty Survives Only When Americans Defend It Across Lines Of Faith*.
**Action Frame:** *When One Community's Freedom Is Tested, Others Show Up Before Discrimination Becomes Precedent*.
**Campaign Signature:** *Safeguarding Our Shared Canvas: One Constitution. Many Faiths. Shared Freedom.*
#SharedFaithLiberty

**Some Suggestions for Potential Anchor Partners:**
The DC-based Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty is a strong Christian prospect as their work is explicitly grounded in faith and religious freedom.
Reverend Adam Russell Taylor, Sojourners President and Minister at Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, VA
Americans United for Separation of Church and State is another DC-based natural institutional partner.
The Interfaith Alliance is also based in DC and represents a national interfaith network, that has already collaborated around a 'religious liberty for all' framework.
The Episcopal Peace Fellowship is a Chicago-based organization that has maintained an ongoing voice in support of Palestinian rights and autonomy, with the NYC-based Episcopal Church, their governing body, maintaining strong human rights advocacy, legislative policy, and international partnerships.
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action is a DC-based progressive Jewish organization that is especially interesting as their CEO recently articulated a solidarity model connecting antisemitism with and other forms of racism, and institutional oppression.
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
The Unitarian Universalist Association,
Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus,
The Society for Humanistic Judaism,

**Suggestions for Targeted States:**

Obviously, Texas is the strongest candidate for an education and religious-literacy pilot. In September the Texas State Board of Education adopted a revised high-school social-studies standards that treats Christianity and Islam asymmetrically, requiring negative aspects of Islam without equivalent inclusion for Christianity.

Michigan is a compelling interfaith-solidarity pilot. With a substantial Muslim, Arab-American and Jewish civic infrastructure, recent events have already generated public Muslim-Jewish solidarity. Subsequent to the March 2026 Temple Israel incident, Bend the Arc highlighted assistance from both Iraqi-American institutions, as well as, Detroit Jews for Justice's rejection of antisemitism, Islamophobia and anti-Arab division.

New Jersey is a strong case due to the land-use and RLUIPA component. The Bernards Township mosque litigation provides a documented federal demonstration of why religious-land-use protections matter.

Ohio could potentially serve as an organizational replication pilot. With CAIR of Northern Ohio and Americans United already having evidence of direct engagement around church-state separation and religious freedom.

California has potential to function as the coalition-development and message-testing state. Rather than being a principal policy battleground, the state has unusually deep Muslim, interfaith, civil-rights, academic and advocacy infrastructure.

**Suggestions for the 5-state Architecture:**

| State | Primary campaign laboratory | Component for testing |
|---|---|---|
| Texas | Education & Religious Literacy | Can the shared-liberty frame change a live curriculum narrative? |
| Michigan | Interfaith solidarity & Community Safety | Can solidarity become durable reciprocal infrastructure? |
| New Jersey | RLUIPA & Land Use | Can documented precedent mobilize cross-faith legal advocacy? |
| Ohio | Chapter & Partner Replication | Can existing relationships become a repeatable local model? |
| California | Coalition & Narrative Development | Which messages, messengers and tools travel across communities? |