

Legislative Agenda

Virtual Muslim Day at the Capitol. Feb. 16, 2021

Support the Religious Holiday Recognition Bill

- Permits school districts to “consider the community’s religious observances when adopting a school calendar.”
- This would allow school districts to recognize the needs of their students when determining breaks, thus increasing local control and improving the district’s ability to better serve families.
- Permissive language means the bill allows but does not require school districts to act.
- Status: This bill is scheduled to be heard in a house committee by March 2021. **This bill passed in the house but didn’t get a hearing in the senate in 2020.**
- **Question for Representatives: Would you be willing to co-author this bill?
- **Question for Senators: Would you be willing to call Senator Chamberlain, (committee chair) and Senator Gazelka (Majority Leader) to give the bill a hearing? And would you be willing to support a “Motion to discharge the committee” for this bill so it can move directly to the Senate floor?

Rental assistance and culturally appropriate and affordable housing

- All Minnesotans deserve to live in quality housing that they can afford.
- The pandemic has intensified the housing crisis in Minnesota, especially for renters. With rising unemployment, many families are struggling to pay rent. Rent increases have far outpaced the growth of wages. Too many families are paying too much for housing, hurting their ability to support their families.
- Newer Minnesotans such as immigrant and refugee families are especially in need of access to larger units. In addition to a bold investment in bonding for affordable housing.
- We also need to launch a state-based rental assistance program so that all Minnesota renters can afford their home and choose where they want to live. We support HF40/SF333 - State rent assistance program.
- To address the wealth gap in our communities, an essential first step to building wealth is homeownership. Many Muslims are unable to benefit from Minnesota’s down payment assistance program due to faith restrictions around conventional loans. Alternative banking institutions (such as Guidance, Devon, & UIF) are not allowed to access this down payment assistance program thus excluding the Muslim community. We want the Minnesota Housing Agency to allow nontraditional banking to access down payment assistance so we can ensure every Minnesotan has a path to homeownership in our great state!
- Investing in the stability of a home is investing in the stability of our community.

Opioid crisis in minorities and communities of color

- All communities of Minnesota are impacted by the opioid crisis, especially minorities and communities of color.
- According to the MN Department of Health, people of color are dying from drug overdose deaths in Minnesota at much higher rates compared to whites. In Minnesota, Native Americans are seven times as likely to die from a drug overdose and African Americans are twice as likely to die from a drug overdose as whites.
- Comprehensive, community-based approaches have been proven as the most viable way of reducing the risk of drug abuse.

- A bold change of approach is needed. Rather than relying on reactive measures such as policing and incarceration, we need to build a proactive, community-based mental health, recovery & reintegration approach.
- In addition to a change of approach, we need to provide funding for innovative community-based programs to provide culturally aware counseling & rehab services to communities of color.

Police brutality in Minnesota

- Over the last five years, the Minneapolis police department recorded 6,650 acts of force against a black person, versus approximately 2,750 instances against white persons. Although black people make up less than 7% of the population in Minneapolis, nearly 60% of the time that police use force, the subject is black.
- We need to divert funding from militarization of police departments.
- Police departments should divest from training programs offered by apartheid regimes and foreign military to MN police departments.
- Expand youth services, mental health programs as well as school counseling for communities of color and vulnerable neighborhoods.
- HF593 (Frazier)- Prohibit police officers from affiliating with white supremacist groups, causes, or ideologies.
- HF0640 (Gomez) - Establish law enforcement citizen oversight councils