



Dear Mr. President,

The National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC) congratulates you on being elected as the forty-fourth President of the United States. Formally launched in 2004, NNAAC is a national network of independent Arab-American community-based social service organizations in ten states. It is a project of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS). NNAAC's primary mission is the development of grassroots institutions that can meet the needs of, and represent the concerns of, Arab Americans at the local level and collectively raise these concerns on the national stage. We look forward to working with you and your administration on a broad range of issues. Consistently identified issues of concern within our communities are as follows:

Just and Humane Immigration Reform

Our immigration system is currently broken, lacking many safeguards for civil liberties and human rights, worker protections, and practical enforcement. We seek realistic reforms to our immigration system that ensure immigrants' rights are protected, that they have access to an attorney and are granted a fair day in court, that work visas are issued fairly to meet economic needs, and that families are kept in tact. New legislation must also include an end to inhumane raids and employ alternatives to detention.

Protection of Civil Liberties and Human Rights

Our communities have faced a variety of issues in this post September-eleventh era, such as indefinite detentions and mandatory registration programs like National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS). All too often we see instances of ethnic and religious profiling and discrimination aimed specifically at the Arab, Muslim, and South Asian American communities. We must put an end to profiling tactics that target members of specific communities. In particular, there are many incidents of people being detained, handcuffed, questioned, and separated from their families at airports and the U.S./Canadian border. This stems from the broader issue of terrorist watch-lists. There must be a streamlined process for people to be permanently removed from terrorist watch-lists once they have been cleared, rather than being subjected to consistent detentions and searches.

Resources and Protections for Refugees

Since the start of the Iraq War in 2003, the U.S. has been receiving an increasing amount of Iraqi refugees. These refugees face a vast range of issues that must be addressed including trouble adjusting to their new life in the U.S., learning English, finding housing, and finding viable employment that can sustain their families. In addition, they face a variety of health and mental health issues. We must implement systematic policies to address these needs. We also must have increased resources to deal with these multi-faceted issues and properly serve these refugees. In

addition, we need immigration laws that ensure the protection of refugees and allow more refugees to enter the U.S.

Health Care Reform

Arab Americans, like so many other Americans today, face a vast amount of health care issues that must be addressed. In particular we must ensure that everyone has access to equal and affordable health insurance that allows people to choose their own doctors and health care providers without gaps in coverage or access. Finally, we need a health care system that meets the needs of at-risk populations and provides preventative care.

Access to Human Services

In these difficult economic times, our community, as with all communities, is in great need of funding for additional human services. Pertinent needs in the community include a broad range of social services, employment services, and health services. We want to ensure that funding for human services remains stable in these difficult times, and in some cases, even increases, as needs of the community continue to increase.

Support for National Service

NNAAC's AmeriCorps program, the Arab American Resource Corps, currently has seventy-five members serving in communities across the country. We fully recognize the importance and many contributions of such service programs, and feel strongly that national service programs should have the increased support needed to grow and flourish.

We look forward to working with you in all of these areas. If you have additional questions, please contact Nadia Tonova, Advocacy and Policy Supervisor, at 313-843-2844 x. 103 or via email at ntonova@accesscommunity.org.

Sincerely,

National Network for Arab American Communities