



Council on American-Islamic Relations Pennsylvania

Philadelphia Office
1218 Chestnut Street, Suite 510
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Tel: 215-592-0509

info@philadelphia.cair.com | <http://pa.cair.com>

February 10, 2011

Examiner.com
555 17th Street, Suite 400
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Jay Keller:

It is with considerable alarm that I write to inform you that a writer for the Philadelphia Libertarian Examiner, Mr. Aaron Proctor, has been engaging in deeply troubling hate speech against Muslim Americans and libel against my organization, the Council on American-Islamic Relations - Philadelphia Chapter (CAIR-Philadelphia). By way of illustration, I refer to the following two postings on the Examiner website in this letter, which are representative of the consistently hateful speech by Mr. Proctor:

1. <http://www.examiner.com/libertarian-in-philadelphia/cair-an-islamic-terrorism-group-coming-to-delaware-county-next-month#ixzz1DaRLqskH>
2. <http://www.examiner.com/libertarian-in-philadelphia/cair-pat-meehan-with-us-or-against-us#ixzz1DaS6Cx6k>

First, let me begin with the blatant and troubling hate speech present in these articles. Note that I have chosen only a few select quotes to illustrate my point. Upon reading the entire series of his articles, you will easily see the problem is with more than just a few excerpts, but an overarching tone of bigotry and slander.

- In the first article, Mr. Proctor states that “CAIR is an Islamic group that forwards the false belief that Islam is a ‘religion of peace’ when it is simply a terroristic world-dominating political movement and not a religion at all.”

This statement is not only troubling for its falsity, but for the hate it expresses toward an often marginalized group of Americans. Presently, the national climate of volatile rhetoric about Islam and Muslims has been linked to extremist threats and events across the country. Mr. Proctor’s hateful rhetoric reflects very similar sentiments harbored by those who have committed hate crimes against Muslim Americans in recent months. While I understand and respect that Islam and Muslims can provoke critical discourse, and it is much needed, the notion that Islam itself is a terroristic political movement and not a religion constitutes hate speech, pure and simple.

As an analogy, if anyone said Judaism is not a religion, but a world dominating political movement, such a person would correctly be labeled an anti-Semite. As such, it is important to recognize Mr. Proctor as an anti-Muslim bigot.

- As another example, in the same article, Mr. Proctor further demonstrates his hate speech by stating that the “City of Chester is full of black people who have fallen for the scam of Islam.”

I am not looking to infringe upon Mr. Proctor’s freedom of speech. However, I recognize that statements that are libelous and defamatory are not protected speech. By writing you, I am engaging in my civic duty to report hate speech to you, as I know Examiner.com has high standards for socially productive speech and meaningful criticism as you continue to grow into a leading forum for news and opinion.

Specifically, Mr. Proctor’s writing does not meet the Examiner’s standard of publishing “objectively factual and newsy stories” or “thought-provoking op-ed articles.” The Examiner’s editorial guidelines explicitly state that all “articles must be free of profanity, **hateful speech and libelous statements**, and any content you have reason to know is false or misleading” (emphasis added). As such, I respectfully request Mr. Proctor be asked by Examiner to pursue his right of free speech through avenues other than Examiner.com.

As stated before, Mr. Proctor’s speech is eerily similar to those who have committed hate crimes against Muslim Americans. As a precaution, CAIR-Philadelphia has taken steps to notify local police of the possibility that Mr. Proctor will be a security threat to our annual banquet (the event he is trying to sabotage through his Examiner articles). We are particularly concerned as many families with children plan to attend. We have forwarded his profile picture to police which was available on Examiner.com.

I must also bring your attention to numerous libelous statements in Mr. Proctor’s writing against CAIR and CAIR-Philadelphia.

- “Oh, did we mention they [CAIR] are un-indicted co-conspirators in a case involving groups that donate money to Hamas? That’s the largest terror-funding trial in American history, as well.”
- “Yesterday’s posting about the terroristic organization, CAIR...”
- “CAIR is an un-indicted co-conspirator in the Hamas funding trial.”

Although CAIR-Philadelphia licenses the use of the name CAIR, we are legally distinct entities. CAIR-Philadelphia is its own 501(c)(3) registered, non-profit organization. Like all other chapters, we are financially independent from CAIR, are registered independently, operate under our own Board of Directors, have our own by-laws, hire, manage and fire our own staff, and act independently, although in collaboration on many things, with CAIR and its other chapters. Furthermore, CAIR-Philadelphia was never named as an unindicted co-conspirator in any terrorism funding trial. This information is publicly available.

Repeatedly calling our organization terroristic is libelous and defamatory. No evidence exists that there is any truth to Mr. Proctor's statements, and CAIR's standing with the state and federal government is clear. The Internal Revenue Service gives tax breaks to those who donate to CAIR-Philadelphia, as our chapter is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

I am confident that you will proactively address the issues in this letter. Mr. Proctor's defamatory articles should either be retracted or his privilege to write for the Examiner forsaken due to the Examiner's own standards for meaningful and quality writing. However, I am obliged to state that the false characterization of CAIR constitutes defamation per se under the law, entitling us to pursue a cause of action without needing to prove actual damages.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Moein Khawaja', written in a cursive style.

Moein Khawaja
Executive Director

CC: Examiner.com via contactus@examiner.com

CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.