

To my fellow Americans, I would first like to thank our creator Allah (God) for giving me the opportunity to thank the organization known as CAIR Philadelphia. The esteemed efforts presented by this organization were of much comfort despite arising out of a life-changing and emotionally distressing situation. The staff at CAIR -- and its organization -- represent Muslim Americans who are victims of their constitutional rights being violated. These violations can stem out of ignorance of the violators as well as the more serious blatant bigotry which shows the courage CAIR possesses. This organization, CAIR, and in particular the Philadelphia staff who I have connected with, realize both reasons and not only use their time, resources, and efforts to use the legal system for justice against the blatant bigotry but they most importantly seek to educate, which is what makes their efforts in the country important for not just Muslims living in America but to America as a whole, if we want to be the progressive holistic society we strive to be.

In my particular case with CAIR, my employer ([REDACTED]) tried to use an informal blackout period as a way to disguise a form of discrimination. Legally, any policy cannot be used, directly or indirectly, to deprive a person of their civil rights (which I did not know about prior to being educated by CAIR). My situation involved an approved request for time off to make the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, the fifth and final pillar of Islam. I requested off two months in advance and disguised my reason for going only out of fear of growing Islamophobia in America.

It was only a week prior to my trip when my supervisor found out the real reason for my trip that this informal policy was used against me. It subsequently caused demotion, termination, and a permanent ban on employment at [REDACTED] nationwide for me speaking up and out against this injustice.

CAIR took it upon themselves when no one else would listen, when no lawyer would sit without a huge fee up front, when no family member, despite how hurt and distraught they felt, could help me besides their tears. CAIR listened, empathized, and used their resources to bring attention to the fact that America wishes to uphold its civil rights amendments to keep this country superior and these rights cause better harmony. Unfortunately, it still needs to be enforced today so that we can live better in such a great country.

We are currently resolving this case, and I hope this case helps the people who are having a difficult time with their employers, when it comes to praying or taking their Hajj trip. I hope and pray that this helps make a lasting impression that not only can we practice our religion and be productive citizens but that, through ignorance, we cause much harm and distress on our fellow Americans. I hope we all take the opportunity to educate ourselves on cultures that we do not understand so that we can change for the betterment of our society as a whole, as discrimination does nothing but divide and education and acceptance will take us much further.

Glenn Mack, Jr.