



# Muslim Voice

News Journal: Volume 6, Issue 1

January 2023

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[The Muslim Voice](#) Project offers a platform of technology services for the Muslim Community of North America. It provides the needed infrastructure to transform the community towards [unified positions](#) and integrated action plans. It seeks Muslim representation at local, state, and federal levels. So, please [help](#).

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## Welcome Message

We wish that you and the community are well, and you will enjoy this issue of the News Journal. Please share it with your family and friends, and forward it to your own email list.

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## Editorial

### 2023 – A Good Year

We wish you a happy 2023. And something good has already begun in 2022.

Muslims have remained thus far passive with respect to safeguarding their rights in USA. They have remained content in their homes and in their mosques. They have remained aloof from active participation in how the socio politics of USA work. The system in turn has largely ignored their presence and abused their rights. While they were comfortable in their comfort zones, the system passed draconian laws like the Patriot Act and Secret Evidence Act whereby they will put you in custody and not tell you or your lawyer what were the reasons.

But that is changing. Muslim individuals have decided that enough is enough for this abuse of their rights. They have decided to become part of the places where these abuses originate. Catch it in the bud: we will be there and not let it originate.

It was 2006 when Keith Ellison kick started this blessed process. He got himself elected as the Congressman from District 5 of Minnesota. May Allah bless him handsomely for that favor to the Muslim community and the USA. And he did it without any help from the community at large: in fact, some community members are so set in their comfort zone that they regard participation in elections as “haram”. Al-Hamdo-Lillah Keith Ellison managed to do it in spite of that.



Attorney General of MN, Keith Ellison

On June 5, 2018, Ellison announced that he would not seek reelection to Congress, and seek the office of Minnesota attorney general. Ellison won the Democratic primary and defeated Republican Doug

Wardlow in the general election. He became the first African American elected to the statewide office in Minnesota, as well as the first Muslim in the U.S. to win statewide office. He was reelected in 2022.

A grateful America thanks Attorney General Keith Ellison.

And Allah blessed the effort because He is Rahman and Rahim towards the Muslim Community, in spite of them. In the next elections in 2008 Andre Carson was elected Congressman from the 7th District in Indiana. He was the second Muslim to be elected to Congress, after Keith Ellison of Minnesota. Congressman Carson became the dean of Indiana's congressional delegation after Representative Pete Visclosky retired in 2021.



Congressman Andre Carson, 7<sup>th</sup> District, IN.

In 2018, two more champions were elected to US Congress: Ilhan Omar from the 5<sup>th</sup> District of MN and Rashida Talaib from the 13<sup>th</sup> District of Michigan. Their election raised many flags, with President Trump, with Republicans, and with AIPAC. They were called names, ridiculed, insulted, and slanderously accused. But they rode the evil attacks with steadfast truthfulness, grace, and dignity. They were honorably reelected in 2020 and again in 2022.

Allah is Rahman and Rahim towards Muslims, in spite of them.



Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, 5<sup>th</sup> District MN.



Congresswoman Rashida Talaib, 13<sup>th</sup> District MI

These four giants of America set a change in motion. Today we have 33 Legislators in 8 States in USA. We have 49 elected members at city and county level. Now we have a voice in USA. However, we need a bigger voice to adequately protect our rights and safeguard ourselves from malicious actors. We have a [plan](#).

Long Live USA.

Along with the Nationwide progress, our own project of [Muslim Voice](#) is also progressing, Al-Hamdo-Lillah. We have already published four books to spread the word. We have steadfastly issued this Monthly News Journal, rain or shine. We have maintained our technically advanced servers where we ourself host our websites and our blogs; as well as send out bulk emails like our News Journal. Al-Hamdo-Lillah. These are significant achievements, programmatically and technologically. We ask you to please accelerate this progress. Please participate by visiting our websites, writing to us, contributing articles to our News Journal, publishing your books with MV Publishers, and making donations.

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## News in Brief

Please **click** on the hyperlinks for more details:

1. Directory of Elected Muslims in USA
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2. January as [Muslim Heritage Month](#) In NJ.
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6. Watch Muslim Network News coverage of [US midterm elections](#).
7. Watch [Muslim Network News](#) for news coverage in [USA](#) and [Canada](#).
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# Articles for Muslim Community

## CAIR and Jetpac Resource Center

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Jetpac Resource Center is a non-profit committed to increase Muslim representation in U.S. government and politics.

CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, protect civil rights, promote justice, and empower American Muslims.

\*

In a statement, Jetpac Resource Center Executive Director Mohammed Missouri said:

“I’m inspired by the historic wins we are seeing in local and state elections across the country. It shows that the Muslim community is building solid infrastructure for sustained electoral success. Policy decisions on education, housing, climate, and civil rights are shaped by state legislatures and it is critical that our voice is represented in the policymaking process.”

\*

In a statement, CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad said:

“Yesterday’s historic string of record-breaking American Muslim electoral victories is a testament to our community’s ongoing rise in American politics and the trust our neighbors have placed in us to represent them and fight for their interests.

“We are witnessing the next step in the American Muslim community’s political transformation from marginalized voices that were sidelined, or worse, to decision makers. These newly-elected officials are building upon the success of our community’s decades-long investment in civic engagement, voter registration and running for office.

“We call on all American Muslim elected leaders to draw inspiration from their Islamic faith and work for the best possible future of all Americans.”

\*

CAIR and Jetpac Resource Center noted that a growing number of Islamic community centers and mosques that opened their doors as polling stations for voters to cast their ballots, including the Muslim Association of Virginia's Dar Alnoor Islamic Community Center in Prince William County.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, the first and only Muslim elected to a statewide position, won reelection, and so too did members of Congress Ilhan Omar (D-MN), Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), and Andre Carson (D-IN).

**21 incumbent state legislators who were up for reelection won decidedly and will notably be joined by 12 history-making Muslim candidates to increase the total number of Muslim state lawmakers nationwide to 33.**

**Maine:** Democrats Mana Abdi, Deqa Dhalac, and Ambureen Rana are the first Muslims elected to the Maine State Legislature, all to State House seats.

**Illinois** elected their first Muslim state legislators in Abdelnasser Rashid and Nabeela Syed who will serve in the Illinois House of Representatives.

**Ohio** Democrats Munira Abdullahi and Ismail Mohamed will become the first Muslims to serve in the state legislature.

**Texas:** Salman Bhojani and Suleman Lalani are the first Muslims elected to the Texas Legislature.

**Georgia,** Nabilah Islam is the first Muslim woman elected to the State Senate and Ruwa Romman the first woman elected to the state's House of Representatives. Farooq Mughal also won a state house seat – with incumbent State Senator Sheikh Rahman winning reelection. Georgia will have the second highest number of Muslim state legislators in the country, second to Minnesota

**Minnesota** elected their first Muslim woman to the State Senate in Zaynab Mohamed. Samakab Hussein also won a state representative seat, giving Minnesota a total of 5 elected state legislators.

**Michigan,** Alabas Farhat won his race for state representative to double the state's tally.

**Pennsylvania:** Tarik Khan successfully ran for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to give the state 3 state legislators.

[Source link](#)

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## **Muslims and Mid-Term Elections**

The Nov. 8 midterms almost saw Dr. Mehmet Oz become the first Muslim U.S. Senator. The Republican TV doctor-turned-politician - who wasn't exactly popular among a wide swathe of Muslim Americans -

would have been a controversial first for the community. But Oz's loss to Democrat John Fetterman in Pennsylvania masks what was otherwise a record-breaking election for the community of at least 3.45 million people.

**Muslim Americans won at least 83 seats** across local, state, and federal midterm elections as of Thursday morning, according to an analysis by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a civil rights and advocacy group, and Jetpac, a nonprofit focused on increasing Muslim political representation in the U.S.

*Almost 150 Muslim Americans had run this year for office, including 51 state legislative candidates across 23 states.*

Following 12 winners of the State Legislature elections made USA proud.

**JETPAC**

**2022 HISTORYMAKERS**

 <b>Abdelnasser Rashid</b> IL State House	 <b>Nabeela Syed</b> IL State House	 <b>Nabilah Islam</b> GA State Senate	 <b>Zaynab Mohamed</b> MN State Senate
 <b>Munira Abdullahi</b> OH State House	 <b>Ismail Mohamed</b> OH State House	 <b>Mana Abdi</b> ME State House	 <b>Deqa Dhalac</b> ME State House
 <b>Ruwa Romman</b> GA State House	 <b>Suleman Lalani</b> TX State House	 <b>Salman Bhojani</b> TX State House	 <b>Farooq Mughal</b> GA State House

*This year's wins surpass the prior record of 71 that CAIR and Jetpac counted in 2020; they have been tracking this data for the last six years.*

Illinois had its first Muslim Americans elected to the general assembly: 23-year-old Nabeela Syed and 33-year-old Abdelnasser Rashid both won seats in the state house. Salman Bhojani and Suleman Lalani became the first Muslims elected to the Texas legislature. In Georgia, Palestinian American Ruwa Romman became the first Muslim woman elected to the State House. In total, Georgia elected four Muslim Americans to office.

Nabilah Islam, a Bangladeshi Muslim American, had run for (and lost) the competitive Georgia U.S. House seat back in 2020. But in this week's midterms, she became the first Muslim woman and first South Asian woman to be elected to Georgia's Senate. "I decided not to give up," Islam says. "I still wanted to make a difference in my community in the state levels; there's many things we needed to work on, including access to Medicaid and protecting abortion rights."

The victories for Muslim Americans like Islam help lay out a roadmap to greater federal representation.

"Today's state legislator is tomorrow's member of Congress," says Mohammed Missouri, executive director of Jetpac. "It's definitely a pipeline." He points out that Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, and Keith Ellison all served in their state legislatures before scoring a congressional seat. "They didn't come out of nowhere... they spent years building community trust... and then when they decided to run for Congress people knew who they were."

Today, Most Muslims skew heavily Democrat—particularly since many Republicans have supported policies that harm the Muslim community, including sweeping surveillance programs and religious profiling. All four of the Democrats elected to Congress to date have been Democrat, even as some Muslims have also felt mistrust toward the party.

That political leaning is reflected in the Muslims who ran for office this year. Many state legislators that won in the midterms identify as progressive Democrats, Missouri says.

And these state legislators can have a massive impact on local communities. "We actually get to shape the budget—billions of dollars for our state—and make it better for our community," says 25-year-old Zaynab Mohamed, who made history on Tuesday after being elected to Minnesota's Senate. The Somali American was one of three Black women elected to Minnesota's state Senate for the first time as well as the youngest woman and Muslim woman.

"I just often think about the fact people are like: 'Hey, wait your turn' or 'you're too young, you're too black, you're a visible Muslim who is wearing a hijab. You're really going to walk down those halls, these people will never understand.' I'm like, no, they won't, but they sure will when I get there," Mohamed says.

Robert McCaw, government affairs director at CAIR, points out that the Muslim American community is among the country's most diverse religious communities. "Muslims are rarely just Muslim. They're also Arab, African American, South Asian, or another ethnicity with their own unique experiences to add to the policymaking process."

Jetpac's Missouri notes that some Americans have a misguided notion that Muslim candidates only care about foreign policy. "It's part of the trope that we're this *other*, we're not American," he says. Missouri adds that Muslims "care deeply about specific issues" for the community but also "from the perspective of justice for all people."

That focus on local issues has been key for Muslim candidates to capturing the trust of their districts in this election. But that's not to say many are ignoring issues that affect Muslims specifically.

Romman, the Palestinian American Muslim who was elected to Georgia's state house, says that while she is interested in equitable health care and school funding, she is also looking to advocate on issues specifically affecting the Muslim community. "We don't want thinly veiled anti-Muslim laws known as anti-Sharia laws; going after the Muslim community for enhanced surveillance is unacceptable; working with anti-Muslim think tanks that have been fueled by dark money is unacceptable," Romman says.

"To be able to say that not just as an advocate, but now as a member of the Georgia General Assembly, is going to be powerful and it tells... people like me that you have a space here and that this electoral process will and can include you," Romman adds.

[Source link](#)

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## 'We should lean into who we are'

Muslims won seats in eight states: Georgia Texas, Illinois, California, Minnesota, Maine, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

These newly elected officials come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, including Somali, Pakistani, Afghan, Indian and Palestinian, but tend to be young and Democratic.

*The path to these wins was paved in part by higher-profile Muslim politicians, including Keith Ellison, the first Muslim to serve in Congress, who is now Minnesota attorney general; André Carson, a congressman from Indiana; and Ilhan Omar of Minnesota and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, the first Muslim women to serve in Congress.*

But Mohamed Gula, national organizing director at Emgage, a Muslim civic engagement non-profit, said the phenomenon was also fueled by the community's desire "to create social change, to create a culture shift and the systems that are supposed to represent us".

Below we profile four of the twelve heroes, arbitrarily picked out of the twelve.

### *Nabilah Islam*

As a woman, a millennial, a progressive – and a Muslim – Nabilah Islam faced long odds in her bid for elected office in Georgia. Two years ago, she ran for Congress but lost in the Democratic primary, despite

a high-profile endorsement from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. This year, she ran for state senate to represent parts of the Atlanta metro region and won.

“People thought it was unthinkable that in the south, someone would vote for a woman with the last name Islam,” she said. “I’m like: they did. Fifty-three per cent of this district did.”

Islam, 32, is among a record number of Muslims elected to local, state and national office in November. A new analysis by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (Cair), a civil rights and advocacy group, and Jetpac, a non-profit focused on increasing Muslim political representation in the US, found that Muslims won at least 83 seats nationwide, up from an estimated 71 in 2020.

“I ran because I wanted to make sure that we had representation in the halls of power,” said Islam, a Bangladeshi American who is the first Muslim woman and the first South Asian woman to be elected to the Georgia state senate. “It’s so important that we don’t run away from ourselves and we lean into who we are. I think that’s what inspires folks to go out and vote for people, because they trust them.”



Nabilah Islam, second from left, won a state senate seat in Georgia. Photograph: Social media courtesy campaign of Nabilah Islam

### *Aisha Wahab*

Aisha Wahab, the first Muslim and the first Afghan American elected to California’s state senate, said her run was about paying it forward to the next generation. “We need to see what else we can do for our community or country that we live in,” she said.

Wahab, who first served on city council for Hayward, in the San Francisco Bay Area, will represent a majority Asian American and Latino district that has one of the largest Afghan populations in the US. As the only renter in the California legislature, Wahab, who grew up in the foster system, ran on a platform of

affordable housing, supporting small businesses to ensure local job creation and expanding Medi-Cal coverage.



Wahab served on Hayward's city council. Photograph: David Weigel/The Washington Post/Getty Images

[Source link](#)

### *Salman Bhojani*

Texas Standard, Published November 12, 2022 at 11:26 AM CST

On Tuesday, Texans elected the first Muslim and South Asian state representatives. Salman Bhojani will represent House District 92, which includes part of Arlington, Euless and Bedford.



Democrat Salman Bhojani is among the first Muslim Americans to be elected to the Texas House of Representatives.

Bhojani, originally from Pakistan, emigrated to Texas with his parents when he was a teenager. After working his way up through various jobs, he eventually became the first Muslim-American to hold elected office in Euless. Now he makes his way to the Texas Capitol.

Salman Bhojani emphasizes that the representation matters a lot, and I feel that I've had historic campaigns in the past, and I want to draw attention to the fact that we have so much diversity within our great state and our cities, and so we need that representation in the statehouse and elected officials as well.

There have been instances, as I'm sure you're aware, of unwelcoming behavior toward Muslims at the Texas Capitol as recently as 2017. There were issues with protesters on Muslim Capitol Day. Do you worry about any of that as you head to Austin?

I don't think so. I think our state is very diverse and it's very welcoming, and there are a lot of people who understand that there is no one religion that the state endorses and there're so many religions that can come together and respect one another, and that's what my rhetoric has been since I got politically engaged as to how do we get civility in our discourse regardless of our faith, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation?

How do you go about doing that? Everyone is talking about this, but a lot of people are sort of searching to find answers to that.

I think you start by exemplifying that behavior yourself, and that's what I've tried to do: be really humble and listen to all perspectives. In fact, I have knocked on doors of Republican households and have heard their perspective as well, and that's how I have a very bipartisan nature. By exemplifying that behavior, people will see that, you know, yes, he wants to reach across the aisle; he wants to get multiple perspectives. And I've actually created an interfaith advisory council for my office already, where we have members that live in HD-92 from various faiths and faith leaders that are here and understand my message of coming together and having interfaith dialog and respecting one another.

If you don't mind, I'd love to ask you a question, because it takes a certain kind of person to run for political office. We saw low voter turnout, and there have been concerns over the years about a decline in civic participation, but here, you made the choice to get involved in politics. What was it that sparked that?

That's a great question. In 2016, we elected our former president, and I felt that was not the right decision for America. America basically opened its arms to me when I came in as a 19-year-old boy in this country and worked at gas stations, mopping floors for \$6 an hour, and I felt that is what the fabric of America is made of – having, accepting immigrants, accepting people from different backgrounds and different faith, and our former president was really not respectful to immigrants and people from the Muslim faith. And so that's what made me, you know, get involved, but it was not just from that perspective. I think we really need to build a pipeline of youth that are from diverse backgrounds to really make sure that we have better representation, and that's what I feel that I'm going to start by myself and creating that enthusiasm within minority communities.

What you described as being a 19-year-old who comes to Texas getting that first job – what were you going for at the time, and how did those early months and years shape you here in Texas?

Sure. Yeah, so as an immigrant into the country, I felt like I had to put food on the table. I had to, you know, earn money, so that way we could have all the things that we wanted to have in this country and send my kids to school. And so I felt like it was a lot of hard work through the years. I worked three jobs to make ends meet. I also then moved my way up. I became a cashier, then a manager, and then bought my first business – actually, that’s in the District 92 in Arlington in 2003 – and then I put myself through law school at SMU and became an attorney after four years and worked at Haynes and Boone, where I met Chairman Rafael Anchía, who actually put in the bug in me to make sure that I ... As attorneys, it behooves us to give back to our community, and that’s how I got also involved in my city, but it’s been a really blessed journey so far where I’ve lived the American Dream, and my goal in representing District 92 residents is giving them opportunities to have and live that American Dream – their version of the American Dream.

I’ve spoken with freshman representatives in the Texas House in the past, and close to the end of their term, some have expressed frustration because, you know, you’re new. You’re learning the ways of the Legislature, and sometimes some of the folks who have been around there for years, if not decades, sort of seem to steer everything, and it’s hard to get heard. Are you concerned about that, and I wonder how you might mark your term as a success? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Yeah, I’ve thought a lot about that. I’ve persevered through a lot of Islamophobia. People told me to go back to Pakistan and, you know, you’re not an American and that you bring Sharia law, and so I’ve been through a lot, and I’ve persevered through all that because I really have the passion to serve the community and to really serve the people of HD-92. Last session, I talked to a lot of representatives and was really tough on them, but I think I have an optimistic outlook to a lot of different things, and I really feel that I have the bipartisan approach that’s needed to be successful in the state Legislature – how to work across the aisle to make sure that we work on kitchen table issues. There are issues that every single Texan family talks about while they’re having dinner, and that’s the issues that I really want to focus on: a good economy, access to healthcare and education for everyone.

[Source link](#)

### *Dr. Suleman Lalani*

Lalani, a 54-year-old native of Pakistan who has lived in the Houston area and practiced medicine for nearly two decades, became the first Muslim elected as a Texas lawmaker.

"It was unfortunate that they had to play that card, Islamophobia, and play the card of cultural division and all of that," Lalani, a Democrat, said Monday after beating Mathews for the District 76 seat in the Texas House of Representatives. "But we rose above all of that and stayed focused on our strengths. We were very positive."

Lalani, a Sugar Land resident elected to represent part of Fort Bend County, made Texas history along with another Muslim man who originally is from Pakistan. Fellow Democrat Salman Bhojani was elected to represent District 92 in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, making him and Lalani the first Muslims and first South Asia natives elected to the Texas Legislature.



Lalani, who said he and Bhojani have known each other "for the longest time" because of their common backgrounds, described their election as a "very proud moment" and also a responsibility.

In Fort Bend County, one of the most racially diverse in the United States, India native KP George was elected to a second term as county judge.

"As a physician, when a patient comes to us, we never ask them their religion or culture or voting history, right?" Lalani said. "We take care of the ailments. That's the same mindset I'm taking to the (legislature). I'm here to solve the problems and represent my constituents, irrespective of their color, creed, gender or religion. Fort Bend is a melting pot, a loving coalition of cultures, religions and races, and here we build bridges and not walls. That's what I look to do."

Mathews' campaign did not respond to a Monday email seeking comment on the outcome of the District 76 race as well as the aforementioned campaign message.

Lalani, a primary care physician who said he specializes in geriatrics, said he was drawn to politics because of a desire to improve deficiencies and disparities in healthcare. He first ran for public office in 2020, losing to Sarah DeMerchant in a runoff for the Democratic primary in Texas House District 26.

District 76 is a newly created, adjacent district in Fort Bend County. Lalani beat Vanesia Johnson in this year's Democratic primary, which also went to a runoff, before earning 57.2 percent of the vote in the general election against Mathews.

Lalani said he had better name recognition this time around. He also said he did more in-person voter outreach than he did in 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Campaigning by community members also helped, according to Lalani, who said he heard about instances in which his patients promoted him and vouched for him in places such as local grocery stores.

"That's huge," he said. "These are things that money can't buy. These are things, relationships and trust, you build up over time. I'm blessed to have that."

Now that he's been selected to represent part of Fort Bend County in Austin, Lalani said he wants to be an impactful lawmaker. He said he wants to expand Medicaid in Texas, make healthcare more affordable and accessible to more residents of the state and restore women's right to have an abortion in Texas.

Improved public education, gun safety and infrastructure also are key issues for Lalani, who said the needs of his constituents will ultimately shape his policies.

"Whatever is needed, I will do that," he said. "I'm not here to just warm the seat. I want to be a value-added member of the legislature."

[Source link](#)



## [The Great Muslim Nation](#)

We are the only organization of its kind in North America

eMail : [iCommunity@mail.MuslimPlanet.org](mailto:iCommunity@mail.MuslimPlanet.org)

Website : <http://MuslimVoice.org/>

We are nonprofit though not yet registered as a 501 (C) 3 organization due to lack of resources.

The donations are not tax deductible.

We urge you to [JOIN](#) the cause.

Please click to [DONATE ONLINE](#) using Credit/Debit card or PayPal.

You can mail your Donation Checks to:

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