

# The Vital Case for teaching Civic Engagement to Muslim Students

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## 1. Statement of Focus

It is 2017. There are approximately 3.5 million Muslims living in the United States. This number is expected to more than double by 2050 (Pew Research, 2016). There is a critical need to encourage our young people to become a much more visible and vocal part of the American fabric - to get involved.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Defining "Civic Engagement"

There is a wide spectrum of opinion with regards to what civic engagement encompasses. For this reason, it is necessary to clarify the definition of this term from which this paper will proceed.

First, let us consider what it is not. For the purpose of the present study, our view of civic engagement must be more detailed than a nebulous, catch-all term, such as the one proffered by Duke University in 2012: "Being sensitive to, and understanding, the world's problems, as well as addressing them through collaboration and commitment". Since the focus of this paper is to make a case for the pressing need of Islamic schools in the United States to provide education specifically designed to encourage young Muslims to become engaged in local, state, and even national concerns, definitions that refer to deliberation and collaboration with peers (Levine, 2012), or encouraging citizens to "take action when appropriate" (Colby and Ehrlich, 2000) are not helpful because this is exactly what the Muslim community needs to overcome: our tendency to be an insular community and our reticence to become involved in community concerns that are not specifically Muslim concerns. Commenting on the rise of Islamophobia in America, Shaykh Yaser Birjas said the following in a 2011 khutbah: "...when you think about it and when you check the Muslim community from within – being an imam for many years in this society and visiting so many Muslim communities – I honestly sometimes cannot really put the blame on anyone but the Muslim communities...[b]ecause the Muslim community up to this day, is not yet up to the level where you expect them to be engaged in the civil society in the best way possible" (Birjas, 2011). As Mustafa Elturk (2018) pointed out, "With the ongoing Islamophobia, Muslims must rise to defend themselves and the faith they claim. Challenges are inevitable. However, they can be overcome if we have the desire to civically engage".

A definition of civic engagement for our Islamic community in general, and for our Muslim youth in Islamic schools in particular, needs to include all those Islamic values and injunctions that we hold dear as practicing co-religionists: the fundamental bond between faith and action, the Prophet's (saaws) example in caring for everyone in his community, and the Islamic principle of combating evil and ignorance. The Center for Democracy and Citizenship stated that "[civic engagement] will require widespread civic involvement that taps the common sense, energy, insight, and effort that comes from citizens with different talents and points of view working together, often across lines of sharp cultural, partisan, racial, and economic differences. Without active citizenship, we will continue to struggle with narrow, unfulfilling roles and ineffective institutions" (in Levine, 2012). This goes a long way towards a comprehensive understanding that includes all members of the community working together, as well as connecting the requirement of taking action to enhancing our institutions, but it doesn't specifically address what Loeb stated about civic engagement's moral implications when he quoted Staub: "Humane morality is learned through moral action" (Loeb, 2010).

For these reasons, the definition to which this paper will refer to and operate from originated from an immigration lawyer based in Seattle, WA:

"[Civic engagement] should encompass the values of being a good person. You should care about the rights and privileges of citizenship that have been acquired with great endeavor. So defend them. Defend and protect rights that the Constitution has bestowed on you—not just for yourself but for fellow and future citizens. ...You should also care about society in general and

the politics within it. So, care. Care about yourself, your family, your neighbors, your community, and your country. Care about the world. Be a world citizen and thus a good American citizen.” (Watson, quoted in Zocalo Public Square, 2012)

## 2.2 Civic Engagement in the World

Perhaps the most difficult problem with nailing down a definitive understanding of civic engagement is the fact that it takes “many forms – from individual volunteerism, community engagement efforts, organizational involvement and government work” (Ekman and Amnå, 2009). Echoing the world-wide sense of growing concern with the disengagement (and even disenfranchisement) of the majority of the world’s youth in social capital, the United Nation’s Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) launched a research group in 2015 that produces an annual report about how the extent of involvement of the world’s youth in civic engagement, further organized into economic, political, and community engagement. For example, one striking find it noted was the rise in NEET youth (Not in education, employment, or training): “According to the International Labour Organization, the NEET rate ... rose 2.1 per cent between 2008 and 2010, to 15.8 per cent, which translates into one in six young people not engaged in work, academic pursuits, or skills acquisition, ...with youth under the age of 25 and young women identified as the most vulnerable” (UN DESA, 2016). In community engagement, the results are mixed. World-wide, community engagement for young people primarily focuses on three areas: volunteering, peacebuilding, and sport for development. The most widely practiced type is volunteerism, but concerns were raised about “aspects of volunteerism that effectively hold young people back and reinforce inequality—particularly among young women” (UN DESA, 2016). Their conclusion is worth noting here:

“Youth volunteerism is a social contract, and for too long young people have had little say in defining the terms of engagement. This needs to change. Societal norms and life circumstances influence an individual’s ability to exercise free will and demonstrate citizenship. History has shown that people who volunteer in their youth can shape not only themselves, their families and communities, but also society as a whole. Nelson Mandela demonstrated this as National Volunteer-in-Chief for the Defiance Campaign of 1952, tackling apartheid at the age of 34. There are thousands of young men and women in the world at this very moment fighting social injustices.” (UN DESA, 2016)

## 2.3 Civic Engagement in the United States

“Horace Mann, the founder of public schooling in the United States, argued, ‘A republican form of government, without intelligence in the people, must be, on a vast scale, what a mad-house without superintendent or keepers, would be on a small one’ (Klaas, 2017). “The Founding Fathers of the United States ... designed a system built to withstand a divisive demagogue. They put checks and balances in place. They carved out a separation of powers that makes it difficult to consolidate power in a single person” (Klaas, 2017). But an educated, aware, and moral electorate is essential for our democracy to survive and thrive. How will future generations be able to deflect the almost guaranteed certainty of future attacks on our system of government if they do not know or understand this system of checks and balances, and the separation of powers? As Klaas pointed out, “... the Founding Fathers feared, but anticipated, the rise of despots and demagogues. They had a better answer: civic education and civic engagement” (Klaas, 2017). Our Constitution “illustrates the complexity of the American system: that it serves the interests of a wealthy elite, but also does enough for small property owners, for middle-income mechanics and farmers, to build a broad base of support. ...The Constitution became even more acceptable to the public at large [when Congress] passed a series of amendments, known as the Bill of Rights” (Zinn, 2003).

However, according to a 1991 poll conducted by the American Bar Association on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bill of Rights, “Only one-third of adult Americans can correctly identify the Bill of Rights and fewer than 1 in 10 know it was adopted to protect them against abuses by the Federal Government” (NYT, 1991). Admittedly, this poll is 26 years old, but it may still be the case today, based on anecdotal evidence gleaned from interaction

with my high school students in our Civic Engagement classes. “People have to learn how to participate in democracy, how to be effective agents of change, how to deliberate across differences and engage and collaborate in social movements. These aren’t things most people are just born with.” (New, 2016, quoting Solomont).

Realizing how important civic education is makes the statement of Ronald Reagan way back in 1961 all that much more poignant and prescient: “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. ...It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for [our progeny] to do the same, or one day, we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States where [people] were free” (Reagan, 1961).

#### 2.4 Civic Engagement in U.S. Education

“Recent research from Harvard and the University of Melbourne has shown that most young people in the United States either take democracy for granted, or don’t value it. 3 out of 4 people born in the 1930s – those who witnessed firsthand the horrors of Nazism and fascism – believe that it is essential to live in a democracy. For Americans born in the 1980s, less than 1 in 3 feel the same” (Klaas, 2017), but does seem that much progress has been made, especially at the beginning of President Obama’s second term of office.

During the presidency of Barack Obama, the American Association of Colleges and Universities produced a report, called “A Crucible Moment”, urging tertiary institutions to make civic learning and democratic engagement “an animating national priority” in order to help the country reawaken from its “civic recession” (AAC&U, 2012). Since the report’s release, dozens of colleges and organizations have created new initiatives related to civic engagement (New, 2016). The report’s impact can be gauged from the fact that “Over 500 colleges, universities, and community colleges participated in a set of projects designed to beta test a proposed framework for twenty-first-century degrees... This [framework] makes civic learning one of five expected component elements of undergraduate education” (Crucible Update, 2016). There has been notable increase in Civic Engagement coursework and degrees offered at universities across the U.S. The faculty director of California State University in Los Angeles, Michael Willard, pointed out that “[w]hat’s happening across higher education is a recognition that we need to fulfill our historic mission of preparing students to be citizens through new forms of engagement in civil society. That returns to the foundational purpose of higher education” (New, 2016). This renewed focus by American universities can be clearly noted in this excerpt from the inauguration speech of the president of Duke University in North Carolina, in which he said that we must “... renew our commitment to healing and to serving our surrounding communities. At each key moment of institutional regeneration, our predecessors understood and reconfirmed their obligation to marshal ... teaching, learning, and discovery to positive social ends... we work to heal division within our own community; and we use our skills and knowledge to aid healing and reconciliation elsewhere. We serve our fellow students and colleagues, our local community, and the world beyond to improve life and well-being for others. This work begins here on campus. Our new century demands that we prepare ourselves for a diverse and often chaotic world, whose challenges, controversies, and crises do not stop at Duke’s gates. We need to work together to defend — even seek out — voices that are different from our own. This is hard work, but if we are to heal the divisions in the world we have to open ourselves, honestly and deeply, to a diversity of perspectives” (Price, quoted by Miller, 2017).

This is not to say that civic engagement is “a panacea for the ills of higher education, but it can be part of the solution. There is evidence ... that the growth and sustained role of civic engagement on our individual campuses is institutionalized across higher education [as shown by] the increased number of accrediting bodies that demand we track our engagement” (McBride and Mlyn, 2013). This focus is important because “[w]ithout civic education and civic engagement, it [will] only be a matter of time before an opportunistic showman arrive[s] on the political stage and dazzle[s] his way to [power]” (Klaas, 2017).

Also in 2012, a report came out of the Department of Education called “Advancing Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy: A Road Map and Call to Action” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The Road Map report pointed out that even though America’s ideals, embodied in the U.S. Constitution, remain a model for much of the world, civic knowledge and active participation in the processes that govern us are far from exceptional. For example, the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Civics Report found that not even 30% of 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students had sufficient knowledge of American civics. Also, we lag way behind the rest of the world in voter turnout. According to a Washington Post article, “Among OECD countries, the United States is near the bottom of the pack, ranking 31st out of 34, according to data compiled by Pew. In 2012, 53.6% of the U.S. voting-age population voted, below Canada and Solvenia. Only Japan, Chile and Switzerland ranked lower” (Schwarz, 2015). In this initiative, the federal government, through the U.S. Department of Education outlined nine important steps to advance civic learning and democratic engagement, including adding more items about civic engagement to national student surveys, promoting public service internships and careers, identifying promising practices in civic learning and democratic engagement, encouraging community-based work-study placements, and supporting civic learning for a well-rounded K–12 curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

## 2.5 Civic Engagement in Islam

In our chosen definition of civic engagement, Tahmina Watson spoke about how caring about our communities and about the world in which we live helps us to be good citizens. To this, we could also add, “... and thus a good Muslim”. As Robert Putnam pointed out in his seminal book, *Bowling Alone* (2000), when speaking about social capital: “A society of virtuous, but isolated, individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital”. He meant – as we acknowledge over and over again in our Islamic faith – it is not enough to just be a virtuous person. We must be involved in our communities.

In the field of Tafseer, greater importance is attached to something when Allah (swt) uses a phrase repeatedly. As noted by Nursi, “the repetition renews the address, as it were, with the change and renewal of the generations and centuries. For it does not address only the people of the Prophet’s (PBUH) time: ‘It is as though, addressing every age and every class of people, not as one share of the story or one lesson from an historical story, but as parts of a universal principle, it is newly revealed’” (quoted in Al-Amrani, 2017).

There is an oft-repeated phrase in the Holy Qur’an that cognitively and purposefully connects these two elements – faith and action: ((الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات)). Unusually for the Qur’an, this exact phrase is repeated no less than 35 times, and repeated another 16 times in similar phrases (Quran.com search, 2017). (For specific verses, see Appendix One, p. 11.) The importance of this connection can therefore, not be underestimated. Clearly, it is not sufficient, in our faith, to simply fulfill our daily duties as Muslims. We are required by no less than our Creator to be involved in our communities.

Another well-known verse of the Holy Qur’an, كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

(“You are the best of the nations raised up for (the benefit of) men; you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah...” (interpretation by Shakir, Quran.com, 2017) inspired Shaykh Yaser Birjas to say, “This is one of the core principles of Islam: enjoin good and forbid evil. What is that other than always engaging in civil society?” (Birjas, 2011). In this same khutbah, Sh. Birjas told the congregation that “the welfare and well-being of your community [which is] part of the whole fabric of society” is what we should be focusing on as Muslim Americans (Birjas, 2011).

Imam Omar Suleiman spoke about the catalyst that propelled him into civic engagement, in the aftermath of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (quoted in Crain, 2017): “I will never forget these words,” he says. “There was an evacuee that came from the Superdome that said, ‘I feel like I’ve been spiritually

molested.' And she said that because of all the preachers that were going in there and telling her about God at the time, instead of helping her out. Kind of trying to take advantage of her vulnerability. And that was a common complaint that we had. Hearing those words—spiritual molestation—it was like, *Wow, is this what we do?"*

The previous quote is from a featured article in the main online magazine for Dallas, TX: D Magazine. It went on to say about Omar Suleiman that "he saw it wasn't enough, or sometimes even right, to **talk** to people about God. He needed to **show** them what God's work looks like. As a director for the Muslims for Humanity project, he arranged to rent every apartment he could find in Baton Rouge, found the people in the most desperate living situations, and gave them a new home, four months' rent fully paid. He [worked] alongside members from Catholic Charities, seeing a level of neglect he can still barely talk about. They did this for years. In 2008, when the Klan burned crosses on the lawns of black families in white neighborhoods, he didn't just offer thoughts and prayers. He joined Rabbi Bob Loewy from Congregation Gates of Prayer and other clergy and went out and pulled those crosses from the ground" (Crain, 2017, emphasis mine).

Yahya Emerick declared that "Islam is compatible with democracy" (Emerick, 2004), and Sh. Omar Suleiman noted that "[s]erving others does not mean that you accept their beliefs. It means that your beliefs guide you to serve them. Serving them says nothing about their faith but everything about yours" (Facebook post; date unknown).

### **3. Practical Steps: The way forward**

There are several things upon which we can and should focus. In this section, we will explore those perspectives we must not only avoid, but actively eschew, as well as clear, implementable steps we can take in our Islamic institutions to pave the way for our students, and empower our Muslim youth to be at least engaged citizens, and perhaps leaders, in the United States.

#### **3.1 The dangers of cynicism, apathy, and pessimism**

One of the most successful books published recently that furthers the call for greater civic engagement among Americans is *Soul of a Citizen*, by Paul Loeb. Loeb quoted Alison Smith, an American activist from Maine, who said, "I didn't know whether the initiative [that I had worked so hard for] would pass, but I didn't want cynicism to rule my life. I'd like to see politics bring out the best in us, not the worst. I get tired when people complain all the time but never do anything to change things" (Loeb, 2010). Loeb talked about our American culture's tendency to demean any attempts to bring about change as either fruitless, or self-serving: "...cynicism convinces us that all businessmen and politicians are dishonest, all religious leaders charlatans, all journalists cheap-shot hacks, all social activists fools. Better to expect nothing in this view, than to set ourselves up for certain disappointment" (Loeb, 2010). And it's not only American culture. "An attitude problem with the Muslim community [also exists] that has led to countless of its best workers abandoning all attempts at community work. Who has time to do good and be shot down for it? Who wants to be made to feel like everyone who benefits from the work that you do is doing you a favor? No one. So enthusiasm quickly turns to disillusionment. Disillusionment turns to cynicism. Cynicism turns to apathy" (Muslim Matters, 2013). The temptation at this point is to remind ourselves whom do we serve? However, if a person is feeling overwhelmed and gripped, or even incapacitated, by having such feelings, such tempting reminders may come across as self-righteous and unfeeling, and have the opposite of the intended effect.

To fully appreciate the corrosive effect of contemporary cynicism, imagine adopting the same approach toward our children, spouses, and friends that we often do towards public life. Pretend for a moment that instead of placing our trust in them and forgiving their flaws, we greeted them with derision, suspicion and indifference" (Loeb, 2010). How could an atmosphere of hope and optimism survive in that kind of situation? Optimism is an act of worship in Islam, according to this Hadeeth of the Prophet (saaws): "Hoping for good is also an act of worship of Allah" (Tirmidhi and Hakim).

"As the Ethiopian proverb says, 'He who conceals his disease cannot be cured.' If we're to heal our society... we need to understand our cultural diseases of callousness, shortsightedness, and denial of difficult challenges... and confront the pervasive sense of powerlessness that afflicts our society" (Loeb, 2010). Klaas emphasized that the "survival of American democracy depends on citizens rejecting apathetic indifference and embracing constructive action" (Klaas, 2017).

There is much in our faith that also supports and affirms this view. For example, Allah swt says in the Holy Qur'an, "O you who believe! If an impious person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly, and [then] afterwards [you] become full of repentance for what you have done." Surah Hujarat (49):6. "This verse is a standard for Muslims in evaluating all information. *Ascertain the truth*. Three principles when evaluating a news source are honesty, intelligence, and critical attitude" (Sound Vision, 2016). Also, remember that serving others is almost always uplifting and rewarding. "The best way to thank God is to serve humanity, especially those who have less than you. It helps us gain a better perspective on life's challenges, making us realize how very often, are problems seem so small compared to the awesome difficulties others face" (SoundVision, 2016).

### 3.2 What we can do

In this section, various suggestions will be presented in the interest of comprehensiveness – from the perspective of Islam, as well as scholars in the field of civic engagement.

Keeping the focus of this paper in mind, here in the United States, our Muslim students need to know what their role is and should be as citizens, in addition to representatives of their faith. Struggling through a multitude of emotions as the social political climate wanes and ebbs with Islamophobia, they need to be supported, guided, and given the tools and information they need to navigate and facilitate their way towards adulthood and increasing responsibilities, especially since it has been projected that the Muslim population of the United States will swell to well over 8 million by 2050, making Islam the second largest religious affiliation in the country (Pew Research, 2016).

Islam is a religion which many misunderstand – Muslims as well as non-Muslims. As we have seen, Islam is not incompatible with democracy, and other so-called "western" ideals. Islam teaches us to respect and follow the law of the land. Our faith teaches us that the most faithful of people are those who contribute to society. The most generous of well-wishers are those who love humanity.

Shaykh Yaser Birjas strongly encourages Muslim Americans to become more civically engaged through volunteer activities. He pointed out that "[w]hen the sahabah (RA) embraced Islam, they became the first volunteers in the history of Islam. They sacrificed their time, their wealth, ... and even dire necessities when [it was needed most]. Allah swt [honored] them, saying: 'They prefer others over their needs, even though they themselves are in dire need of it'" (Birjas, 2011). Shaykh Yaser then asked his congregation about their own volunteer activities, both among Muslims and in their communities. He asked, "How much do you volunteer for your ... public library, hospital, or anywhere else that needs volunteers in this community? If we don't do that, then we are lacking so much in proving that this [Muslim] community can really be one of the most civilized, one of the most beautiful, organized communities in this entire society" (Birjas, 2011). In *theislamicworkplace.com*, the authors suggested that imams ask their congregations to "participate in any project of common good, to remain continuously engaged in all civic matters – not just elections, to vote, and to [be aware of the] diverse positions of candidates [for elected office]" (Islamic Shura Council of Southern California, 2008).

As mentioned in the UN DESA report, "Involving youth—as collaborators, team members, leaders and decision makers—in addressing the day-to-day issues that affect them offers a broad range of benefits to both young people and the community.... Such involvement also sends youth the message that their participation has intrinsic value" (UN DESA, 2016).

William Galston enumerated several effective approaches to school-based civic education. This includes, among others:

1. "A deliberate, intentional focus on civic outcomes, such as student's propensity to vote, work on local problems, join voluntary associations, and following the news.
2. "Explicit advocacy of civic and political engagement...
3. "Active learning opportunities that engage students in discussion of relevant issues and encourage them to take part in activities that help put a 'real-life' perspective on learning
4. "... An emphasis on the ideas and principles that are essential to constitutional democracy...
5. "Collaborate with the community and local institutions to provide civic learning opportunities
6. "Infuse a civic mission throughout the curriculum (Galston, 2004, numbers mine).

Klaas is more succinct in his suggestions. They are directed to the general American populace, but can also easily be applied in schools. "First", he said, "vote – even in primaries and local elections" (Klaas, 2017). Our students must understand not only the critical importance of voting, but also know their rights with regards to voting. They must be made aware of their state's voting laws. Additionally, local elections tend to be more personally relevant to students, and so lessons should be designed to arm students with the resources to being informed voters. "Second, we can make our political engagement social" (Klaas, 2017). By way of explanation, Klaas continued, "If we stay silent, and don't encourage others to speak out, then the voices of extremists are all we hear; if we all speak up, extremists get drowned out" (Klaas, 2017). Lastly, and very importantly, Klaas emphasizes that we need to find "common ground about democratic principles. ... *We can disagree without being disagreeable about particulars*" (Klaas, 2017, italics mine). Then we can "close ranks around bedrock principles". He is right when he said, "Polarization is a gift to would-be despots" (Klaas, 2017). Our partisan online presence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is strengthened by search engines that use algorithms to only show us search results that fit our personal profile.

Loeb encourages us to learn stories about those who have been involved in civic engagement for their motivational value. "We take the stories of people who've struggled for justice in the past as a challenge to do the same. Others have risked and persevered. Now it's our turn... We are more likely to challenge homelessness if we hear the testimonies of individual people living on the street. We will work to overcome illiteracy after gaining a sense of what it's like to be unable to read." (Loeb, 2010)

Finally, Ariana Figueroa of National Public Radio listed 6 suggestions, summarized from scholars in the field. Much of these suggestions mirror what Galston said earlier, except for the following:

- "Student-led volunteer ideas can teach students to work together on group projects and foster civic participation
- "Let students speak!" Like the UN DESA, Figueroa said this "can help students feel their voices are respected and valued.
- "Programs like Model UN can simulate adult civic roles. iCivics... uses role-playing games to simulate government" (Figueroa, 2017).

**Conclusion:**

In promoting civic engagement, we need the optimism and energy of Senator Robert Kennedy: "Each time a person stands for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he or she sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. And crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance" (Robert Kennedy, quoted in Loeb, 2010).

In promoting civic engagement for our Muslim students, we also need the candor and sincerity of Shaykh Omar Suleiman: "[T]here was a shooting at North Lake College, in Irving, which is next door to [Omar Suleiman's] kids' school. He was 'an absolute mess,' he says, as May and Abdullah and their classmates were locked down for a couple of hours, helicopters circling overhead and information scarce as to what exactly was

happening. (It turned out to be a stalker who killed a young woman before turning the gun on himself.) When May got home, she had a question for her father: 'Baba, do you think Trump sent the shooter?'

"A 7-year-old is having that conversation," Suleiman says. "She's connecting the dots. That there are people that hate us enough that they want to kill us. So my 7-year-old making those connections horrifies me. What is she internalizing here? She's seeing armed protesters at 5 and 6 years old. She's hearing people call her mom names in public. She knows, and I'm like, *This is what our kids are growing up with*. They're going to be messed up if we don't show them a way, how to respond to this in a productive fashion. They can grow up filled with hatred. She already feels otherized, right? She already feels that way. She's 7. So you think about the community, what Latino kids feel," he continues. "They're going to school and some of them are peeing their pants in school—these are middle school kids—because they're afraid that their parents aren't going to be home when they get home. The apprehension that black kids feel around cops" (Sh. Omar Suleiman, quoted in Crain, 2017).

There it is, in a nutshell: This is why Civic Engagement should be a vital element in our Islamic schools. "Civic engagement is the key to unlocking a better future." (Klaas, 2017; p. 251)

To conclude, when we promote civic engagement, let us not forget the lessons of history: "Martin Niemöller was a pastor in the German Evangelical (Lutheran) Church, an early supporter of Hitler who later turned against him. He was imprisoned in German concentration camps, including Dachau, from 1936 to 1945, when he was freed by Allied forces. He said:

'In Germany, they first came for the Communists, and I did not speak up, because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak up, because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak up, because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I did not speak up, because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me and by that time, no one was left to speak up.'" (Quigley, 2017)

Let us close with these unforgettable words of our dearest and most revered role model in civic engagement, our Prophet Muhammad (saaws):

On the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, "Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith." [Muslim]

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدِ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أضعفُ الْإِيمَانِ".

[رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ].

Reference : 40 Hadith Nawawi 34  
English translation : Hadith 34

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## Appendix One: Verses in the Quran connecting having faith with doing good deeds

SEARCH RESULTS FOR: الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات

(In the order in which they were arranged by Quran.com's search engine)

Exact phrase:	41:8	42:23	29:7
5:93	95:6	47:12	22:23
84:25	5:9	10:4	24:55
103:3	38:28	38:24	4:57
11:23	45:30	65:11	29:58
30:45	18:30	2:25	47:2
32:19	42:26	48:29	40:58
13:29	3:57	Almost	2:82
19:96	10:9	exact phrase:	22:56
31:8	85:11	22:50	4:122
18:107	26:227	29:9	42:22
30:15	14:23	7:42	
98:7	34:4	45:12	
22:14	4:173	35:7	