The Year in Review
2015
Celebrating 35 Years of Dedicated Service

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Overview

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) is a civil rights organization committed to defending the rights of people of Arab descent and promoting their rich cultural heritage. ADC was founded by former U.S. Senator James Abourezk in 1980. Today, ADC is the largest Arab American grassroots organization in the U.S. ADC supports the human and civil rights of all people and opposes racism and bigotry in any form. We serve as a public voice for the Arab American community in the United States on policy issues, educate the American public in order to promote greater understanding of Arab history and culture, and organize the Arab American community in furtherance of the organization's objectives.

ADC is proud to be the only Arab American organization on the Executive Committee of the U.S. Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (Leadership Conference), the largest coalition of civil rights organizations in the United States. The Leadership Conference’s membership includes the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC) to name but a few of the organizations. ADC continues to be a steadfast advocate for the rights of Arab Americans on a number of policy issues, while consistently handling an ever-increasing caseload.

The ADC Legal Department has taken on hundreds of cases covering a wide range of areas of discrimination and related issues; employment discrimination being among the most prevalent, alongside varied immigration cases. There continues to be an influx of Syrian and Yemeni nationals seeking Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and asylum. Complaints regarding discrimination in education and religious accommodations in prisons rose, along with issues concerning prison conditions and treatment.

The Legal Department strengthened its network of attorneys and supporters throughout the past year, and was able to efficiently handle a large number of cases and policy issues. Education and immigration were also a key issue for ADC from a policy perspective, with great anticipation among the community and ADC’s coalition partners for new immigration legislation, and providing resource equity and accountability to English Language Learners. ADC was on the front lines of responding to the refugee crisis and anti-refugee bills, countering violent extremism programs, and combating anti-Arab and Islamophobia rhetoric.

Hate crimes also featured prominently in the work of ADC Legal over the past year, as the U.S. Department of Justice revised the hate crime tracking form to include tracking of hate crimes against Arabs and Arab Americans. ADC remains diligent in its work with established coalitions and is consistently dedicated to building new partnerships with other minority groups on issues of mutual interest. The Legal Department continues to work hard to ensure that the voice of the Arab American community is heard by decision-makers in government on all levels.
U.S. SUPREME COURT
AMICUS BRIEFS

SUPREME COURT CASE ON THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM: ZIVOTOFSKY V. KERRY

In June 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of ADC and the State Department. The Supreme Court held that Section 214(d) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act infringes on the President’s exclusive recognition power and policy to withhold recognition on the status of Jerusalem. ADC filed an amicus brief to the Supreme Court of the United States in Zivotofsky v. Kerry in September 2014. In the brief, ADC supported the State Department's position that Section 214(d) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act is unconstitutional. Section 214(d) allowed American citizens born in Jerusalem to put “Israel” as their place of birth on their passport, while not allowing Palestinian Americans born in Jerusalem to put Palestine as their place of birth on their passports. ADC addressed the discriminatory effect of Section 214(d) on Palestinian Americans, arguing that it violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as applied to the Federal Government through the Due Process Clause of the 5th Amendment. ADC also expressed its concern that Congress is increasingly pushing forward discriminatory and biased legislation in favor of Israeli Americans and to the detriment of Arab Americans. ADC was the only Arab American organization to file a brief in the Supreme Court on the Jerusalem passport case.

SUPREME COURT CASE ON EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION: EEOC V. ABERCROMBIE

ADC filed an amicus brief in the Supreme Court of the United States in EEOC v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores, Inc supporting the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) position that employees have a legally protected right to practice their religion in the workplace by wearing articles of faith, including the Muslim hijab. In this case, Abercrombie refused to hire a Muslim woman who wore her hijab to her job interview. Abercrombie’s district manager told the store manager that the woman’s practice of wearing the hijab conflicted with Abercrombie’s “look policy.” ADC was joined in this brief by other organizations supporting the right to religious accommodation. On June 1, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld religious protections in the workplace and held that, “an employer may not make an applicant’s religious practice, confirmed or otherwise, a factor in employment decisions.” It was irrelevant whether Ms. Elauf explicitly told Abercrombie that she was a Muslim and is required to wear a hijab to work. She was not hired because she wore a hijab—an employment decision based entirely on a manifestation of faith. The Supreme Court deci-
sion prevents employers from masking discrimination with feigned ignorance and circumventing protections established in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

SUPREME COURT CASE ADDRESSING EQUAL REPRESENTATION IN LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS: EVENWEL V. ABBOTT

On September 28, 2015, ADC joined the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (The Leadership Conference) in supporting equal representation for equal numbers of people in the Supreme Court case of Evenwel v. Abbott. This case challenges the long-standing practice in the U.S. of counting every person when drawing electoral districts. The plaintiffs in the case seek to narrow who is counted in districting by using measures such as citizen voting age population, voter registration or voter turnout. If the Court agrees with Evenwel, it could result in a lack of representation for countless individuals, including immigrants, people of color, people with disabilities and families with children. ADC’s interest in this case arises from serious concerns that large segments of the Arab American community would be excluded from representation if the law required redistricting based on voter registration rather than total population. It is important for our community that our concerns are heard by our representatives. After all, the actions of our congressional members do not only impact voters, but non-voters as well as those without permanent legal status. ADC provided research and legal analysis to the amicus brief, demonstrating that total population as the basis for redistricting will help to ensure that Arab Americans are counted and represented in the political system. Along with the ADC, the amicus brief was supported by a broad range of civil and human rights groups including the NAACP, the National Urban League Advancement Project, Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC), the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), LatinoJustice PRLDEF, the National Immigration Law Center and the League of Women Voters.

SUPREME COURT CASE ADDRESSING USE OF RACE CONSCIOUS ADMISSIONS: FISHER V. UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

ADC signed on in support of an amicus brief in Fisher v. University of Texas to the U.S. Supreme Court with the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. In Fisher v. University of Texas, ADC supported the right of universities and colleges to incorporate race conscious admission processes for the purpose of promoting diversity.

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

A substantial percentage of cases handled by ADC Legal during the last year were related to employment discrimination. The recent surge of such discrimination cases began in 2010 and has
continued to grow in recent years. The nature of complaints has included individuals being called “terrorists,” “sand ni**ers,” and “camel jockeys,” by co-workers, co-workers wearing turbans and faux bomb vests, unjustified demotions, unfair withholding of promotions, and unfair dismissals. ADC continues to reiterate to employers that Arab Americans and Muslim Americans have the right to be treated by their employers and co-workers in accordance with their basic civil rights and liberties. The Legal Department has focused its resources on employment discrimination cases through greater advocacy, assistance with complaint filings at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Labor, support of litigation where appropriate, and collaboration with other legal experts in the area. ADC has also embarked on an educational campaign to raise public awareness of the problem and provide guidance on how to deal with various employment discrimination scenarios.

**IMMIGRATION**

Immigration remained a dominant issue for the Legal Department. There is a broad spectrum of complex immigration issues facing the Arab American community today. Delays in immigration petitions or applications, threats or experiences of detention or deportation, and general immigration filing assistance are among the areas in which ADC Legal has assisted clients. ADC continues to call on the Arab American community to take action by encouraging Congress and the Obama Administration to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

**REDESIGNATION OF SYRIA FOR TPS**

ADC filed a request with the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), urging DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson to re-designate Syria for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in the Fall of 2014. In accordance with 8 U.S.C. § 1254a, the Secretary of Homeland Security may designate a foreign country for TPS due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country’s nationals from returning safely, such as an ongoing armed conflict.

On January 5, 2015, the Department of Homeland Security announced the extension and redesignation of Syria for TPS. DHS announced that it would extend Syrian TPS for an additional 18 months, from April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016. The extension allows currently eligible TPS beneficiaries to retain TPS through September 30, 2016, so long as they otherwise continue to meet the eligibility requirements for TPS. The redesignation of Syria allows additional individuals who have been continuously residing in the United States since January 5, 2015 to apply for TPS and for Employment Authorization Documents. ADC previously submitted TPS requests to DHS in April of 2013. Both of ADC’s prior requests to designate Syria for TPS were granted. ADC’s Legal Department regularly provides pro bono legal advice to Syrian nationals seeking information about refugee status, temporary protected status, and asylum in the United States.
DESIGNATION OF YEMEN FOR TPS

On April 22, 2015, ADC filed a formal petition with DHS requesting that Temporary Protected Status (TPS) be granted to Yemeni nationals currently present in the United States. Due to the worsening humanitarian situation on the ground in Yemen and the mounting number of deaths, it has become eminently clear that the forced return of civilians poses a grave threat to their personal safety. The ADC Legal Department is, and has been, providing assistance to nationals of Yemen in the U.S. who are seeking immigration assistance.

ADC CALLED ON THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE BOLD ACTION TO ADDRESS THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

On September 25, 2015, ADC and a diverse coalition of national organizations urged President Obama to lead by example and to go well beyond refugee intake goals recently announced by the Administration for 2016 and 2017. The letter was sent under the umbrella of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 200 diverse national organizations who work together to promote civil and human rights. Other organizations signing the letter included the NAACP, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, National Council of La Raza, the Anti-Defamation League, Human Rights First and the National Partnership for Women and Families.

ADC also sent its own letter specifically calling on the Obama Administration to accept and resettle at least 200,000 total refugees in the next fiscal year, including at least 100,000 Syrian refugees. In the letter, ADC stated that the U.S. has failed to lead in addressing the largest refugee crisis of our time, admitting only 1,600 of 4 million registered Syrian refugees into the United States since 2011. Syria’s neighbors have demonstrated their willingness to bear more than their share of the burden of caring for Syrian refugees. ADC stressed that the U.S. has the capacity, and the moral responsibility, to do more to help these desperate people.
ADC URGED CONGRESS TO OPPOSE DISCRIMINATORY EXCLUSIONS TO THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

On December 4, 2015, ADC released a statement and action alert in opposition to blanket exclusions under Senate bill 2337, the Visa Waiver Program Security Enhancement Act. Rather than enhancing security, the bill penalizes business people, health aid workers, doctors, journalists, translators, and military support personnel who traveled to Syria and Iraq. Alarmingly, this bill also disproportionately impacts Arabs who traveled to Syria and Iraq to visit family, seeking to get their families out of harm’s way. Without substantive changes, S.2337 will be effective at discriminating against Arabs and humanitarians, but ineffective at actually securing the safety of Americans.

Days later, on December 7, 2015, ADC released a statement and action alert urging the House of Representatives to vote no on H.R. 158, the “Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015”. H.R. 158 authorizes profiling based on a person’s national origin and prohibits their travel into the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). First, H.R. 158 directly targets Syrians, Iraqis and Sudanese people with blanket exclusions, prohibiting even European nationals who hold dual citizenship from traveling into the U.S. via the VWP. This prohibition will apply to even those who were born in Europe and never stepped foot in any of the designated countries. Second, the bill prohibits anyone who has traveled to Syria and Iraq since March 1, 2011 from traveling to the U.S. via the Visa Waiver Program. This would effectively penalize people who traveled to Syria, Iraq, Iran and Sudan for humanitarian work. ADC believes that there are avenues to strengthen security other than placing blanket exclusion on all countries designated under this bill and groups of people based on their national origin.

ARAB AND MUSLIM GROUPS SUE KERRY, CARTER OVER U.S. CITIZENS TRAPPED IN YEMEN

ADC filed a lawsuit against the United States Secretary of State John Kerry and Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter seeking government action to evacuate American citizens trapped in Yemen. Plaintiffs in the case, all American citizens or permanent citizens trapped in Yemen, challenged “the constitutionality of the United States government’s action and/or failure to act to protect United States citizens in Yemen, whose lives are in danger from ongoing military action and violent attacks.” The complaint requested an order requiring the State Department and the Department of Defense to bring all U.S. citizens from Yemen to their homes in the United States.

THE YEMEN AMENDMENT 103 TO THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

On May 15, 2015, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted an amendment calling on President
Obama to evacuate American citizens and nationals trapped in Yemen. The amendment was adopted as part of a larger annual defense spending bill as well as in support of an amendment to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay. The Yemen Amendment was sponsored by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and John Conyers (D-MI). ADC organized mass advocacy action from our members to demand passage from their representatives in the House in the weeks leading up to the vote. ADC also worked closely with Representative Dingell’s office on language and strategy to ensure the passage of the Yemen Amendment.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON IMMIGRATION DETAINEES

ADC submitted written testimony and reports on religious rights violations and religious accommodation issues at several immigration detention centers in 2015, namely those run by Corrections Corporation of America. ADC’s reports and testimony highlighted how religious accommodations were used in a disciplinary manner, as a reward and punishment system, highlighting the blatant disregard of guards and staff for prisoners’ religious rights. ADC also addressed the lack of accountability and oversight of the DHS over privately contracted facilities, and the duty of the DHS – Office of Civil Rights and Liberties to protect immigration detainees and enforce its religious accommodation protocols.

IMMIGRATION DETAINEE MATTERS

Arab and Arab American detainees and prisoners, held in prisons and immigration detention centers, continue to face discrimination and abuse. Common complaints allege the denial of religious accommodations, which ADC addresses directly with the Bureau of Prisons within DOJ. A common issue affecting immigration detainees is the proximity of the detention facility to the detainee’s family. Detainees are often transferred to different states, making it extremely difficult for the family to visit and, more importantly, separating the detainee from his or her attorney. ADC was successful in obtaining the release of individuals detained for non-criminal immigration violations, and worked closely with DHS to ensure that families are not separated. ADC has raised concerns with DHS and the Federal Bureau of Prisons regarding violations of the First Amendment right to exercise one’s religion and to religious accommodations. The Legal Department has provided legal assistance in cases addressing denial of access to the chapel and dietary accommodations during Ramadan.

WATCH LIST AND PORT OF ENTRY PROFILING

ADC continued to receive reports from Arab American travelers experiencing difficulty traveling through different ports of entry. Common problems included undue delay and secondary searches. In some instances, passengers were even detained and not allowed to travel. Some of these problems encountered by Arab American travelers
came as a direct result of different governmental “watch lists.” On February 2, 2015, ADC submitted comments and recommendations to the DHS on the DHS/TSA-019 Secure Flight Records System of Records to address some of these concerns.

ADC RETAINED IN DISCRIMINATION CASE AGAINST SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

On November 24, 2015, ADC was retained to provide legal representation to two Arab Americans who recently experienced discrimination while traveling on Southwest Airlines. The airline prevented the travelers from boarding their flight out of Chicago on November 18, 2015. The discrimination occurred because another passenger heard them speaking Arabic, and reported to the airline that he felt uncomfortable with them being on the plane. The two men called police to report the incident. After intervention by law enforcement, the two men were allowed to board their flight. This case is part of a larger trend of discrimination against Arab Americans following the tragic attacks in Paris, France. ADC has also received complaints from Arab Americans who have been discriminated against while attempting to travel on American, Allegiant, and Delta airlines. ADC Legal Director Abed Ayoub said, “we are very troubled by this recent incident and the overall uptick in anti-Arab sentiment and Islamophobia. ADC stands ready to help victims of discrimination, as we have been doing for the past three decades.”

In January 2015, ADC testified to the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB), pushing for immediate reform and an end to the unlawful practices explained under Executive Order (EO) 12333. ADC specifically demanded legitimate justified legal basis before persons are subject to data collection and/or monitoring under Executive Order 12333. Additionally, ADC called for substantial oversight over implementation of Executive Order 12333 for improper use: 1) to target Arabs and Arab Americans; 2) for non-Executive Order 12333 related matters including but not limited to obtaining incidental data for use in criminal and/or immigration proceedings; and 3) to disseminate to local law enforcement to conduct surveillance on individuals and Arab communities. ADC also requested examination of the number of Arabs and Arab Americans subjected to data collection and/or monitoring under Executive Order 12333, minimization and disposal practices, use as secret evidence in secret courts, and scope of Section 2.4 Collection Techniques and its disparate impact on minority communities.

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

Housing discrimination is an issue affecting a large segment of minority populations in the United States. ADC has received a number of complaints over the past year, most of which involved disputes between landlords and tenants. There have been incidents of individuals being denied housing because of their Arab or Muslim American identity.
Complaints of racially and religiously motivated harassment by homeowners against their neighbors have also increased. ADC works closely with the US Department of Justice (DOJ) and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to address these growing concerns.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT MISCONDUCT CASES**

Misconduct by law enforcement officers does not cover all abusive or discriminatory treatment Arab Americans have experienced when dealing with such agents. Misconduct by law enforcement also includes violation of policies, practices and laws; and acts in which officers would find themselves culpable and liable to disciplinary procedures and, in some cases, possible prosecution. ADC Legal has paid much attention to the use of informant provocateurs by federal agencies within the community. Reports emerged of aggressive tactics used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) informants, including allegations of entrapment, and the strong belief that informants were placed at mosques. ADC has been working to ensure that the FBI does not engage in prejudicial activity, and will continue to monitor the situation into the coming year and beyond.

**ADC WORKED WITH CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS TO ADDRESS POLICE BRUTALITY & RACIAL PROFILING**

ADC has taken an active role in addressing police brutality and its intersectionality with racial profiling. In August 2014, ADC partnered with civil rights organizations to issue a statement of principles. ADC submitted written testimony to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee – Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights at their hearing on the State of Civil and Human Rights in the United States in 2014. ADC’s testimony addressed profiling and law enforcement, criminal justice reform, and racial disparities in incarceration rates and sentencing. In April 2015, ADC went to Baltimore, Maryland during the boycotts and protests surrounding the killing of Freddie Gray. ADC staff assisted in legal complaint in-takes and acted as legal observers; making sure protestors knew their rights and ensuring that rights were not being violated.

**HATE CRIMES AND RACIAL PROFILING**

ADC has persisted in its efforts to help keep Americans of Arab heritage, Muslims, and those perceived to be Arab or Muslim, safe by addressing reported incidents of hate crimes and ensuring the appropriate authorities are informed. ADC has received an increasing number of complaints regarding racially motivated cyberbullying and threats of bodily harm on “hate sites.” In light of this, ADC works closely with the FBI to address these grave concerns and to expedite the opening and investigation of cases that involve serious threats of bodily harm.

**GUIDELINES & TRAINING MANUAL**

On March 26, 2015, the FBI updated the Hate Crime Data Collection Guidelines and Training Manual. The new FBI manual modifies the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program’s hate crime data collection procedures to include the collection and tracking of hate crimes committed against Arab Americans, Hindu Americans and Sikh Americans. This update is much anticipated, as ADC has been calling for tracking of anti-Arab hate crimes for years. Two years ago, the FBI advi-
sory board voted to approve a motion to expand hate crime incident tracking reports to include crimes motivated by bias against Sikhs, Hindus, and Arabs. This expansion came about in part by ADC’s continuing advocacy efforts and grass-

roots advocacy campaigns to promote tracking of hate crimes against minority groups, including Arab Americans. While ADC welcomes the FBI’s collection and tracking of hate crimes against Arab Americans, the FBI’s policies and procedures still have much room for improvement. ADC and many civil rights organizations have expressed concerns with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Guidance for Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Regarding the use of race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity. ADC is particularly concerned that the DOJ’s guidance allows the FBI to continue its extensive data-gathering and “mapping” of racial, ethnic, and religious communities. ADC urges the FBI and other federal agencies to continue to improve their policies and guidelines to eliminate profiling based on race, religion and national origin.

**ADC DEMANDED HATE CRIME INVESTIGATION INTO CHAPEL HILL SHOOTING**

On February 11, 2015, ADC demanded that the DOJ and the Chapel Hill Police Department take immediate action and investigate the shooting of three young Arab Americans as a hate crime under the Shepard-Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act. ADC is working with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and their students on anti-hate crime awareness initiatives on campus and best practices on dissemination of resources.

**ADC COMMITTED TO TACKLING THE RISE OF ANTI-ARAB SENTIMENT & ISLAMOPHOBIA**

The rise in violent messaging targeting Arab and Muslim Americans over social media, especially via Facebook and Twitter, mandates that ADC must continue to devote significant resources and media coverage to counteract these racist and discriminatory messages. This hate rose following the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo offices in France, the Bataclan attacks in Paris, the release of the film “American Sniper” and the “draw Mohammed” cartoon contests. Alarmed by the significant rise in violent hate rhetoric targeting the Arab and Muslim American communities, ADC routinely published community advisories and did interviews on national and local media news outlets warning of an increase in rhetoric directly linked to the negative media coverage and hateful propaganda. ADC also disseminated “Know your Rights” materials to the Arab American community, ensuring that people are informed about where to seek help.
In May 2015, ADC endorsed the End Racial Profiling Act (ERPA). ADC also called on the Arab American community to stand up for justice by urging Congress to end racial profiling. Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (MI) and Senator Ben Cardin (MD) introduced ERPA in the U.S. House of Representatives and in the U.S. Senate (H.R 1056/1933), respectively.

ERPA clearly defines the discriminatory practice of racial profiling, prohibits discriminatory profiling by law enforcement at all levels of government, provides funding to train law enforcement on how to avoid profiling, and punishes law enforcement agencies that continue to use racial profiling. ERPA is needed to help ensure that Arab Americans and other minorities are not stopped, investigated, detained, or arrested based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion.

**SURVEILLANCE AND PRIVACY**

Arab Americans, mosques, cultural centers and our communities as a whole are subject to surveillance without probable cause under the guise of national security. Under current legislation and policies, our government and law enforcement agencies are not required to prove probable cause or even criminal suspicion before subjecting someone to a query for investigation or placing someone on watch lists.

Criminal suspicion is often assumed against our communities because we have a particular name, were born in a particular country, or wear cultural garbs or articles of faith. ADC strongly advocated for the expiration of the USA Patriot Act and substantive privacy protections in the USA Freedom Act.

ADC demanded that any new program 1) end the National Security Administration’s (NSA) bulk collection of phone records and provide more transparency to the NSA, 2) limit the scope of data collection to a “specific selection term” for which there is a “reasonable, articulable suspicion” that the term is associated with international terrorism, 3) require the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to approve selection term requests in advance of data collection, 4) create a panel of advocates to argue for civil liberties in the FISA court, and 5) require the Executive Branch to be more transparent by producing detailed reporting on surveillance.
ADC also advocated for adoption of the Surveillance State Repeal Act and joined with our civil liberties partners including the Bill of Rights Defense Committee and Government Accountability Project to request that the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights investigate the disproportionate impact of “Parallel Construction” on communities of color.

ADC SUBMITTED TESTIMONY ABOUT UNLAWFUL SURVEILLANCE PRACTICES

In January 2015, ADC testified to the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB) to push for immediate reform and an end to the unlawful practices implemented under Executive Order 12333, which requires government cooperation with the CIA. ADC specifically demanded that legitimate justified legal basis must be ensured before persons are subject to data collection and/or monitoring. ADC also asked for an investigation into the improper use of the order. In addition to the need for substantial oversight, ADC highlighted the program’s disparate impact on Arab American and other minority communities. In March 2015, ADC submitted recommendations to the PCLOB on Executive Order 12333. Recommendations included the implementation of a probable cause standard before subjecting a person to data collection and/or monitoring; and the implementation of a judiciary oversight. ADC has regularly advocated against warrantless surveillance targeting Arab Americans, as well as the use of racial profiling in singling out and vilifying members of the community. ADC continues to work with the FBI, Customs and Border Patrol, and the Transportation Security Administration on training materials.

SURVEILLANCE REFORM AND OPPOSITION TO PATRIOT ACT

Since the beginning of 2015, ADC has rallied Congress to allow the expiration of provisions of the USA Patriot Act, namely Section 215, which authorized the bulk collection of Americans’ phone records. ADC organized our community and partners to oppose amendments that would curtail privacy protections, namely Senator Mitch McConnell’s. ADC also partnered with civil rights and liberties groups, as well as the intelligence community, to address the necessary privacy protections and surveillance reforms and produce effective messaging to society. The May 2015 Second Circuit Court of Appeals decision in ACLU v. Clapper was a victory for civil rights organizations because the court held that Section 215 was illegal. The court also stated that Congress did not authorize the NSA to collect staggering amounts of information from U.S. citizens by secretly monitoring their phone records. On June 2, 2015, the USA Freedom Act passed the Senate. The USA Freedom Act is only a first step however; ADC stands firm behind the belief that further surveillance reform is necessary.

EDUCATION

ADC has experienced a dramatic rise in discrimination complaints by students against faculty, staff, and administrators. ADC has provided legal assistance in these cases based on the viability of
claims and the availability of resources. The cases address capricious grading motivated by discriminatory bias, use of administrative procedures to apply discriminatory punishment to a student in retaliation for filing a complaint and discriminatory scholarship selection. ADC also signed on in support of an amicus brief in Vergara v. California with the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality for the Court of Appeals in the State of California. In Vergara v. California, ADC supports protections for teachers to be free from retaliation in employment for teaching controversial materials and First Amendment protected activity.

ADC REPORT ON SECURITY PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

In 2015 The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) created a new web-based program entitled “Don’t Be a Puppet.” Because of ADC’s work and the support of civil rights and civil liberties coalition partners, the rollout of the program has been put on hold. Through the program, teachers become extensions of law enforcement, asked to police the statements and actions of students made inside or outside the classroom, or on social media. This amounts to monitoring and conducting surveillance on our children. Both students and teachers are encouraged to report suspicious behavior or behavior highlighted in the program to law enforcement. Assessing whether or not an individual is radicalized to the point where they pose a risk of violent extremism is far beyond the core business of education. Behaviors and factors identified as “at risk” could also be “misdiagnosed” other issues such as drug abuse, family violence or mental illness. Instead of providing vulnerable children with care, the program promotes bullying and bigotry.

WORKED WITH COALITION TO ADDRESS BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

ADC actively works with the Department of Education and the White House Initiative to increase awareness on bullying and harassment of youth, and mechanisms to prevent and address bullying. ADC served as a panelist, offering expert opinions in relation to the concerns of our community, the unique forms bullying takes in our communities and media messaging.

ADC POLICY AND ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

ADC HOSTED A PALESTINIAN AMERICAN ADVOCACY DAY

ADC and the Coalition of Palestinian American Organizations (CPAO) hosted a day of advocacy for Palestine and human rights on November 16, 2015. Palestinian American Advocacy Day served as a great opportunity for Arab Americans to participate directly in our democracy by learning about issues that affect Palestine and the Arab American community before meeting with members of Congress. The advocacy day began with a Congressional Briefing in the U.S. House of Representatives. The briefing panelists discussed topics related to Palestine and the rights of Arab Americans, including Israeli border discrimination targeting Arab Americans, increasing U.S. aid to Palestinians for water projects and achieving justice for slain Palestinian American civil rights icon Alex Odeh.

ADC DENOUNCED DONALD TRUMP FOR ISLAMOPHOBIA

On September 18, 2015, ADC denounced GOP candidate Donald Trump for promoting Islamophobia.
Mr. Trump validated anti-Muslim comments at a town hall event the previous day in Rochester, New Hampshire. ADC warned that these bigoted comments incite violence and hate crimes against Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim, including Arab Americans. ADC continues to combat the effects of Mr. Trump’s anti-Muslim rhetoric, including recent legislation targeted at Muslims and people who originate from or travel to Arab countries.

ADC PROMPTED WALMART TO DISCONTINUE ANTI-ARAB HALLOWEEN COSTUMES

On October 27, 2015, ADC called on Walmart, Amazon, eBay and Sears Marketplace to stop selling the “Israeli Soldier” and “Sheik Fagin Nose” Halloween costumes, along with other anti-Arab costumes stocked by the retailers.

ADC noted that during the month of October, more than 50 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli Occupation Forces. The Israeli forces are a symbol of violence and fear for Palestinians living under occupation and Palestinians around the world whom have lost their homes and been victims of violence at the hands of soldiers. A symbol of fear, violence and a long history of dispossession should not be used for entertainment purposes. An Israeli soldier costume is highly offensive to Arab-Americans, particularly those who have had family members, including children, killed by Israeli soldiers.

ADC also denounced the retailers’ decision to sell a variety of “Arab” costumes, including an Arab “Sheik Fagin Nose” costume, with a stereotypically long Semitic nose. ADC noted that the glorification of Israeli soldiers juxtaposed with the mockery of Arab people promotes an anti-Arab racism that is all too common in America. Walmart’s webpage for the item suggested that the nose was “perfect for an Arab Sheik,” perpetuating racist tropes that have long been used to demonize, otherize and alienate Arab communities throughout history.

ADC FORMED NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH B STIGMA-FREE

On December 2, 2015, ADC announced our new partnership with B Stigma-Free, a national non-profit 501(c)(3) working to reduce stigma through education, advocacy and community engagement.

B Stigma-Free partners with others who share a commitment to eradicating bias and prejudice. By forging these strategic partnerships with divergent organizations that represent groups of people who are stigmatized, B Stigma-Free works to broaden strength and influence, with the aim of becoming a united and powerful voice for change.

PRESS CONFERENCE TO DENOUNCE POLITICAL RHETORIC TARGETING ARABS AND MUSLIMS

On December 10, 2015, ADC held a press conference at the National Press Club to discuss the spate of bigoted speech espoused by presidential candi-
dates and discriminatory legislation pursued by Congress. ADC was joined by a diverse coalition of civil rights organizations in denouncing the hateful rhetoric and asking for tolerance and acceptance of Arab and Muslim Americans. Other organizations that participated included Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Hindu American Foundation, Japanese American Citizens League, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

At the press conference, ADC President Samer Khalaf stated, “ADC would like to make a call for a national dialogue regarding the issues facing our country and the Arab and Muslim American community. We need to stand united as one country against the intolerance, bigotry and hate we are seeing in this country.”

**ADC MICHIGAN CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS**

As part of its commitment to empower, engage, and educate its constituents and the community, the ADC-Michigan’s highlights below demonstrate its broad approach to advocacy and defending civil rights. These highlights also provide important insight into ADC-Michigan’s focus areas, namely, civil rights, community empowerment, and fighting against bigotry, discrimination, and harassment in all its forms.

**HEALTHCARE SCREENING**

ADC-Michigan organized a grassroots level local initiative in which it sent physicians and student volunteers to Detroit for a free healthcare screening program, co-sponsored by the Detroit Medical Center.

**DISCRIMINATION CASE AT UNIVERSITY IN MICHIGAN**

ADC-Michigan received a call from a local Arab American student who alleged discrimination and intimidation by university employees. The student felt that she was subjected to demeaning and demoralizing behavior which was magnified by her limited English language skills and her nontraditional status as a divorced Arab American woman. ADC-Michigan was able to step in at a critical time to resolve the problem and reach an effective agreement with the university, enabling the student to address all her concerns while simultaneously creating conditions within the university so that such issues are prevented in the future.

**FREE SPEECH AT UNIVERSITY IN OHIO**

ADC-Michigan worked to protect the rights of Arab American students at a university in Ohio who were denied the right to peacefully demonstrate on their campus. The students attempted to exercise their First Amendment rights by demonstrating peacefully and in full accordance with the law. ADC-Michigan collaborated with the Foun-
dation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) organization to advocate for students’ rights.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS SEMINAR

ADC-Michigan organized a “Know Your Rights” empowerment seminar for the Michigan community. ADC met with immigration lawyers regarding ongoing immigration cases and to discuss future “Know Your Rights” seminars.

ADC-MICHIGAN LAUNCHED CYBER CIVIL RIGHTS MONITOR

In response to the recent uptick in suicides resulting from cyber bullying, ADC-Michigan created the first of its kind Cyber Civil Rights Monitor. The program supports victims of online harassment by positioning cyber assault as an offense to civil rights. The Cyber Civil Rights Monitor provides guidance, education, and advocacy for all victims of cyber bullying, regardless of age, ethnicity or religion. The official launching of the ADC-Michigan’s Cyber Civil Rights Monitor was covered by major national television, radio, and news media organizations.

SETTLEMENT WITH CRESTWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADC-Michigan received complaints concerning Arab American students at Crestwood who were disproportionately denied the educational resources, time, and opportunities that were given to other students. As a result, ADC-Michigan contacted the Civil Rights Division of the DOJ, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Michigan, and the EEOC, to express its concerns and that of the parents. ADC-Michigan was able to negotiate a comprehensive settlement agreement.

ADC-MICHIGAN HOSTED A SUCCESSFUL MLK SCHOLARSHIP DINNER

ADC-Michigan is proud to have hosted its largest and most well attended MLK Scholarship Dinner in 15 years. More than 650 people were in attendance to honor the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. Awardees for the evening included Congressman John Dingell, Detroit Free Press Editor Stephen Henderson, Department of Civil Rights leader Leila Saba Hanna, and Fattum Mutahr from GM. Over $15,000 in scholarships were given to High School Students Sarah Mokh, Sondos Hajjar, Khaled Muthanna and others.

INITIATED THE MEDGAR EVER SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

ADC-Michigan initiated the Medgar Evers Summer Internship Program this year in order to forge alliances and improve relations between Arab American and African American youth. Medgar Evers was a legendary civil rights pioneer who fought and died defending the rights of his fellow Americans.
**NETWORK OF ARAB AMERICAN LAWYERS OF ADC**

**CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION COURSE ON ASYLUM**

In March 2015, ADC & NAALA held a Continuing Legal Education Course (CLE) titled “Asylum in Underserved Communities,” to educate attorneys on the nuts and bolts of filing asylum claims and claims for temporary protected status. The CLE program also provided expert advice on proving membership in a Particular Social Group for asylum and country conditions in Syria, Iraq, and Palestine. To date, this CLE has reached over 300 lawyers and immigration advocates. The panelists included: Abed A. Ayoub, ADC Legal & Policy Director; Scott Bratton, Partner at Margaret Wong & Associates, LPA; Susan Akram, Supervising Attorney at Boston University Civil Litigation Program; Nash Fayad, Esq.; and Jennifer Peyton, Esq.

**WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT FORUM**

In February 2014, ADC reformulated its Women’s Initiative as the Women’s Empowerment Forum (ADC-WEF). ADC-WEF works to mainstream gender and women’s empowerment issues across the country, notably through partnerships with various women’s organizations. The ADC-WEF has the important task of promoting issues such as female leadership roles, gender equality, and career development. It is an opportunity to reflect on the progress of women’s rights, as well as a call for change and the continuance of such progress. ADC-WEF is in the process of developing a long-term strategy to address various women’s issues.

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY EVENT**

On Tuesday, March 31, 2015, ADC-WEF hosted the annual International Women’s Day Celebration. ADC-WEF honored May Rihani (Women’s Empowerment & Girls’ Education), the Hon. Hind Al-Fayez (Member of Parliament of The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan), Jihan Mansour (Egyptian TV Media Anchor) and Ralph Nader (Consumer Advocate and Author). The event was held at the Downtown Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Washington, D.C. and included a panel discussion on the topic of this year’s theme, Women Working for Peace. A keynote dinner and awards ceremony followed the panel. Panel participants included: Dr. Osama Abi-Mershed, Director of the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies of Georgetown University; Ambassador Wendy Chamberlin, President of the Middle East Institute; Melanie Greenberg, CEO of the Alliance for Peacebuilding; Souleyma Haddaoui, visiting scholar at Georgetown University; and Dania Korkor, Legal Analyst at FairVote, the Center for Voting and Democracy.
BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ARAB
AND IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

On Friday, March 20, 2015, ADC-WEF presented, “Behind Closed Doors: Domestic Violence in Arab and Immigrant Communities” in co-sponsorship with the Tahirih Justice Center. This program was also presented as part of the ADC Arabesque Lecture Series. The panel explored key issues and trends in domestic violence and educated attendees on important services for addressing domestic violence. It informed attendees about best practices for working with law enforcement to combat domestic violence, as well as best practices for persons in social work and family health fields. Panelists included: Salma Elkadi Abudgideiri, Founding Board Member of the Peaceful Families Project; Lena Alhusseini, Executive Director of the Arab American Family Support Center; Lee Hopkins Social Services Program Manager of the Tahirih Justice Center; Aisha Rahman, Executive Director of KARAMAH; and moderator Darakshan Raja, Program Manager at the Washington Peace Center.

JUSTICE FOR ALEX ODEH

ADC has continued to demand justice for Alex Odeh and his family. Alex Odeh was ADC’s West Coast Regional Director who was assassinated in a terrorist attack on ADC’s West Coast Regional office in Santa Ana, CA in 1985. A bomb detonated as Mr. Odeh entered the ADC office at 9:00AM on Oct. 11, 1985. Thirty years later, the FBI and Department of Justice (DOJ) have failed to bring justice to those responsible for this act of terrorism.

On Friday, April 17, 2015, ADC Orange County Chapter (ADC-OC) hosted a rededication of the Alex Odeh Memorial statue to honor the life and legacy of Alex Odeh. Community leaders, including Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, Dr. Don Craig, President of NAACP Orange County Chapter, the Arab American Democrats of California, Friends of Sabeel North America, the Palestinian American Women’s Association of Southern California, the Palestinian Children’s Relief Fund, South County Labor, and the Union of Palestinian American Women, came to support ongoing efforts to pursue justice for Alex Odeh and his family. As part of this rededication, ADC initiated an awareness campaign about hate crimes. Remarks were also delivered by Mr. Rusty Kennedy, the Executive Director of the Orange County Human Relations Commission and Mr. Ray Cordova, the Chair of South County Labor and advocate of the Arab American community and advisory committee.

On April 24, 2015, Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez of California delivered remarks in the House of Representatives about the life and legacy of Mr. Odeh. In her statement on the House Floor, Congresswoman Sanchez stated, “I will contin-
ue to fight for answers to Alex’s death and bring those that killed him to justice, but let us mark his death by remembering what he stood for and what he dedicated his life to as the pursuit to civil and human rights, as well as peace and mutual understanding between our diverse communities.”

On Oct 9, 2015, ADC sent two letters to the U.S. government demanding justice for Alex Odeh on the 30th anniversary of his assassination. A diverse group of 25 civil and human rights organizations joined ADC in signing the letters, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Federation of American Scientists Project on Government Secrecy, Sikh Coalition, South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT), Hindu American Foundation (HAF), OneAmerica, Washington Peace Center, and many others. In the letters, the coalition urged the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Congress to be vigilant in seeing that justice is done for Alex Odeh.

**TURAAATH PROGRAMMING**

**TURAAATH EVENT: STEPS AND MELODIES FROM THE ARAB WORLD**

Every year, ADC hosts a high-profile cultural event entitled “Turaath”, meaning heritage. Prominent Arab and Arab American artists have participated in Turaath, making it a popular event that many in the Washington, D.C. area look forward to every year and allowing for the cultivation of community while providing an opportunity to learn about the diversity of Arab and Arab American arts and artists. Turaath also offers a vital opportunity for audience members outside of the Arab American community to explore the Arab world in a way that is seldom accessible in the U.S. Important, Turaath allows audience members to become familiar with the work of ADC and our mission.

On November 22, 2015, ADC hosted the 5th annual Turaath at the Lincoln Theatre in Washington, D.C. This year’s Turaath featured The Wishah Popular Dance Troupe from Palestine, performing steps and melodies from the Arab world. Established in 2003 by a group of Palestinian students who believe in the arts as an effective tool to preserve and promote culture, the Wishah Popular Dance Troupe presents emotionally moving shows which feature music and folkloric dance from Palestinian and Arab culture.

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The Wishah Popular Dance Troupe's performance was presented by ADC and The Coalition of Palestinian Organizations (CPAO). More than 700 guests were in attendance, and a portion of the proceeds from Turaath ticket sales went to support Palestinian children through the United Palestinian Appeal’s Healing through Feeling program. This program focuses on the emotional well-being of children in Gaza.
NATIONAL ARAB-AMERICAN CULTURAL FESTIVAL

On April 25, 2015, ADC held the first National Arab-American Cultural Festival at Freedom Plaza in Washington, D.C. Just blocks from the White House, Freedom Plaza’s central location attracted many who might not otherwise be inclined, or able, to attend. By positioning the festival close to the heart of the Capitol, ADC was able to share Arab American culture with tourists and residents alike. In fact, more than 5,000 people of diverse backgrounds attended to learn about and celebrate Arab America. The festival provided a chance for people outside of our community to learn from and get to know Arab Americans, while also creating a space for Arab Americans to celebrate and learn about their heritage. The festival featured Arab music and dance, a fashion show, an NGO Pavilion, an Arab Bazaar and Cultural Market, a children’s arts corner as well as a variety of Arab restaurants providing a taste of the Arab World. The Second Annual Arab-American Festival will take place on July 9, 2016.

ANTHONY SHADID INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This summer, four skillful interns and two outstanding legal fellows joined us in Washington, D.C. for our 35th year of commitment to civil rights. They individually and collectively excelled in their departments, and went above and beyond expectations to adopt ADC’s initiatives as their own. From hard work at the ADC 2015 National Convention to assistance in landmark casework, ADC flourished this summer at the hands of these passionate individuals.

Anthony Shadid Summer Interns

Organizing: Naoufal Guelzim, George Mason University Global Affairs Class of 2014.
Legal: Noor Hamadeh, George Washington University School of Law J.D. Class of 2017.
President's office: Sandra Khalil, Binghamton University Political Science & Arabic Class of 2015.
Communications: Lana Makhzoumi, Southern Methodist University, Fashion Media & Advertising Class of 2016.
Policy: Sam Seham, Amherst, College Political Science & Government Class of 2016.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

The ADC National Convention is the largest annual gathering of Arab Americans in the U.S. As such, it plays an immensely important role not only in the furtherance of the ADC’s mis-
sion but also in the cultivation and organization of our community. Hosted at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., the theme of this year’s Convention was civil rights, allowing for a diverse set of panels and opportunities for Arab Americans to engage with the state of civil rights today. These panels included The Crossroads of Ferguson and Palestine, The Future of the Civil Rights Movement Post Ferguson, Dose of Reality: The Surveillance State Revealed, The Effects of Systemic Violence on Women of Color and Non-Violent Tactics to End the Israeli Occupation and Protect Palestinian Human rights, among others. Additional workshops included student activism and philanthropy sessions. This year’s Convention featured many prominent speakers including legendary political activist Ralph Nader, NAACP Washington Bureau Chief Hilary Shelton, Former Congressman Nick Rahall and Ambassador for the PLO Delegation to the U.S. his Excellency Maen Rashid Areikat. Keynote speeches were delivered by Foreign Correspondent for NBC News and Anchor for MSNBC Ayman Mohyeldin, Member of the Israeli Parliament (Joint Arab List) Yousef Jabareen and Chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Martin Castro. Awardees included Professor Sahar Aziz (Rose Nader Award) Director Anisa Mehdi (Jack Shaheen Outstanding Achievement in Media Award), journalist Sarah Aziza Shihadah (Jack Shaheen Mass Communications Award), Former Congressman Nick Rahall (Excellence in Public Service Award), activist Linda Sarsour (Hala Salaam Maksoud Leadership Award) and journalist Delinda Hanley (Rachel Corrie Award).

NEW WEBSITE

ADC launched a new website in the spring of 2015. This new website is a vast improvement to ADC’s old website. This new website is the first step in reestablishing ADC not only as a leading Arab American organization, but also as a leading non-profit organization in the United States. In the 1990s, ADC was at the forefront of electronic media. We were one of the first non-profit organizations to have our own website. During this time, ADC was widely viewed as the preeminent Arab American organization in the U.S. Our website helped to set us apart not only as an Arab American organization, but as a leading civil rights organization. ADC membership was in its prime, with Convention attendance in the thousands. Our previous website was designed in 2000. This was before the new wave of social media, including Facebook (2004) and Twitter (2002). This was also before the attacks of September 11, 2001. ADC membership began to decline following the attacks.
of 9/11. Due to the rise of anti-Arab hate crimes, many Arab Americans became afraid to be associated with an Arab organization, despite the fact this was a time when Arab Americans needed a strong ADC the most. While ADC continued its mission of working to protect the rights of Arab Americans, its support declined. As other non-profit organizations created new websites with updated technology, ADC’s antiquated website came to symbolize what many young people in the Arab American community came to view as an also antiquated organization, out of touch with the current civil rights issues facing young Arab Americans and recent Arab immigrants. A movement to reform ADC emerged, led by young people who hoped to see ADC return to its former glory and preeminence as the leading Arab American organization.

Since Samer Khalaf assumed his role as ADC president in 2014, he has strived to address the concerns of ADC’s critics and make efforts to reform and revitalize ADC as the leading Arab American organization in the United States. The new ADC website has helped to bolster and facilitate this revitalization process, allowing ADC to more effectively connect to young people through social media and market new ADC initiatives such as the inaugural National Arab American Cultural Festival in Washington, D.C. The new website also re-established and strengthened the ADC brand inside the US, and represents a revitalized ADC.

ADC’s new website uses the WordPress publishing platform which offers many key improvements over the previous ADC website. Importantly, the new ADC website is more aesthetically pleasing than the old website. Because it looks better, it helps to attract people to ADC. Additionally, the new website is much more intuitive and user friendly. It allows ADC to present its work in an effective, clear, and easily accessible format. ADC staff can easily post content to the website and organize the content into functional categories, including: press, action alerts, gallery, features and blog. ADC will soon be utilizing these features to create section of the website to post job opportunities for Arab Americans and members of the Arab diaspora.