

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 14, 2018

Ronald D. Vitiello
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Mr. Vitiello:

We write to express our deep concerns regarding the employment of Emilio Karim Dabul as the spokesperson for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in New Jersey. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Dabul edited and wrote for anti-Muslim hate groups, including ACT for America and the David Horowitz Freedom Center. This long history of supporting and empowering anti-Muslim hate groups and Islamophobes is unacceptable. Given Mr. Dabul's record, we call for his immediate dismissal from ICE and consider his continued employment as tacit acceptance of his bigoted beliefs.

As one of the largest anti-Muslim organizations in the United States, ACT for America has "advance[d] anti-Muslim legislation at the local and federal level while flooding the American public with hate speech demonizing Muslims,"¹ according to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Its founder, Brigitte Gabriel, has argued that a practicing Muslim "cannot be a loyal citizen to the United States of America,"² Without any evidence, Gabriel said on CNN in 2011 that "America has been infiltrated on all levels by radicals who wish to harm America. They have infiltrated us at the CIA, at the FBI, at the Pentagon, at the State Department. They're being radicalized in radical mosques, in our cities and communities within the United States."³ These bigoted beliefs are appalling. Mr. Dabul's decision to work side by side with Gabriel and such an organization speaks volumes.

Mr. Dabul also published an article in FrontPage Magazine praising and defending anti-Muslim activist Steven Emerson.⁴ According to the SPLC, FrontPage Magazine has "become a platform for publishing a plethora of far-right and anti-Muslim writers and commentators."⁵ This outlet was launched by David Horowitz, who is credited with being a driving force of the anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant movements in America. As you may know, Emerson accused former Governor Chris Christie of having an "Islam problem"⁶ and of having a "strange relationship with radical Islam" after Christie nominated Sohail Mohammed, a practicing Muslim, for a state

¹ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/act-america>

² https://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-rodha/maher-season-premiere-inc_b_168972.html

³ <http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1103/08/ita.01.html>

⁴ <http://archive.is/VF38s>

⁵ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/david-horowitz>

⁶ <https://www.nationalreview.com/2012/05/chris-christies-islam-problem-daniel-pipes-steve-emerson/>

judgeship.⁷ Emerson's anti-Muslim history is not new. In 1995, he claimed that the Oklahoma City bomber's attack showed "a Middle Eastern trait" because it "was done with the intent to inflict as many casualties as possible."⁸ Nevertheless, Mr. Debul called Emerson a "hero"⁹ in 2007. And his support has not wavered since. In 2015, Mr. Debul called Emerson a "leader."¹⁰

We have seen a concerning spike in bigotry targeting American Muslims, immigrants, and members of other minority groups since Donald Trump started his presidential campaign and was elected. According to the SPLC, hate crimes and attacks against Muslims rose in 2015 and 2016.¹¹ And a 2017 Pew Research center analysis relied on FBI statistics found that assaults on Muslims have "easily surpassed"¹² post-9/11 levels. The Council on American-Islamic Relations has reported a 17 percent increase in bias-motivated incidents against American Muslims from 2016 to 2017, and a 15 percent increase in the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes in that same period.

Throughout his career, it appears Mr. Dabul has repeatedly chosen to ally himself with hate groups and has supported individuals that propagate anti-Muslim views. These associations and beliefs are outrageous. While these disturbing beliefs might be tolerated in the Trump Administration, they have no place in New Jersey and should have no place in our civil service. As a result, we reiterate our call for his immediate dismissal from ICE. Additionally, we request a written response to our letter that outlines the rationale for Mr. Dabul's employment and his qualifications for this position, as well as an explanation for ICE's retention of employees who embrace bigotry.

We look forward to your prompt response to our above concerns.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Donald Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

⁷ <https://www.investigativeproject.org/2506/gov-christie-strange-relationship-with-radical>

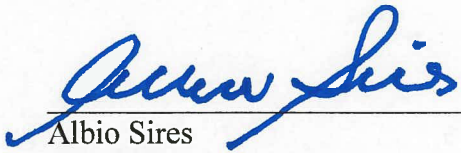
⁸ <https://fair.org/extra/steven-emersons-crusade/>

⁹ <http://archive.is/VF38s>

¹⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_neTsm-RNc

¹¹ <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2017/11/13/hate-crimes-rise-second-straight-year-anti-muslim-violence-soars-amid-president-trumps>

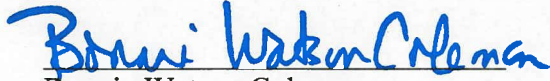
¹² <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/15/assaults-against-muslims-in-u-s-surpass-2001-level/>



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress