

CAIR Urges Ted Cruz to Drop Kevin Kookogey as TN Chairman

News release from [Gates of Vienna](#)):

WASHINGTON, June 9, 2015 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ – The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation’s largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, today urged Republican presidential candidate and Texas Senator Ted Cruz to remove Kevin Kookogey as his state chairman for Tennessee because of his longstanding support for anti-Muslim and Islamophobic causes.

“If Senator Cruz chooses to keep Mr. Kookogey on his campaign staff, it would serve as an endorsement of anti-Muslim hate,” said CAIR Government Affairs Manager Robert McCaw. “In the past few months, Senator Cruz has attended several conferences featuring notorious Islamophobes like Robert Spencer and Frank Gaffney. Despite calls to distance himself from such anti-Muslim bigots, it seems that Senator Cruz is only drawing closer to hate-mongers.”

McCaw noted that in 2012 – as chairman of the Williamson County Republican Party – Kookogey oversaw the adoption of a resolution condemning Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam for appointing a Muslim lawyer to the state’s Department of Economic and Community Development.

The resolution stated in part:

“Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam has elevated and/or afford preferential political status to Sharia adherents in Tennessee, thereby aiding and abetting the advancement of an ideology and doctrine which is wholly incompatible with the Constitution of the United States and the Tennessee Constitution.”

In 2011, the Williamson County Republican Party hosted a luncheon to honor infamous Dutch Islamophobe and far-right politician Geert Wilders. In the past, Wilders has stated "I hate Islam," called the Quran a "fascist book" that should be banned, referred to the Prophet Mohammed as "the devil," and proposed putting a tax on Islamic head scarves (hijab) worn by Muslim women.

In March, CAIR called on Cruz to cancel his appearance at a "New England Freedom Conference" event hosted by a group with ties to white supremacists and other anti-Muslim speakers including Robert Spencer, the co-founder of Stop Islamization of America (SIOA). SIOA has been designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Cruz attended the event.

Two weeks prior to the March conference, Cruz joined Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal and former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Penn.) at an event sponsored by Frank Gaffney's Center for Security Policy, a key group in the U.S. Islamophobia network. Gaffney's conspiracy theories regarding Muslim infiltration of all aspects of American life are so overblown that he was banned from attending the Conservative Political Action Conference in 2011 after accusing its top leadership of being infiltrated by Islamists.

Go Ted!