

Multiple Republicans in Congress post openly anti-Muslim statements

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WASHINGTON — Congressional Republicans have increasingly expressed anti-Muslim sentiment in the wake of the Iran war, with several far-right lawmakers posting Islamophobic statements on social media this week, following recent violent attacks on U.S. soil.

The social media posts have fueled bitter tensions inside Congress, with enraged Democrats vowing disciplinary action against their Republican colleagues while GOP leaders largely shrug aside the inflammatory rhetoric.

Rep. Randy Fine, R-Fla., who had already faced backlash for an anti-Muslim post last month, wrote on X Thursday: “We need more Islamophobia, not less. Fear of Islam is rational.”

Rep. Andy Ogles, R-Tenn., said in a series of posts on Thursday that no country is “freer and safer because Muslims moved there,” and he called “immigration” a “national security threat.” Earlier this week, he wrote that “Muslims don’t belong in American society.”

Also on Thursday, Rep. Brandon Gill, R-Texas, called for “No more Muslims immigrating to America.”

And Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., shared a post featuring a side-by-side photo of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, who is Muslim.

“The enemy is inside the gates,” wrote Tuberville, who is running for governor of Alabama and has been posting the same line in reference to Mamdani and at least one other American Muslim politician on X since well before the war with Iran began.

The latest anti-Muslim statements come in the wake of the Trump administration's war with Iran and multiple recent violent attacks in the U.S., including a car-ramming attack on a Detroit-area synagogue and a deadly shooting at a Virginia college on Wednesday.

The Virginia gunman was previously convicted of supporting ISIS, according to court documents, and the incident is being investigated as an act of terrorism. Army Lt. Col. Brandon A. Shah, an ROTC instructor, was killed in the attack, Gov. Abigail Spanberger

said. The synagogue attack is being investigated as a targeted act of violence against the Jewish community, and the Department of Homeland Security said the driver was a U.S. citizen originally from Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the improvised explosive devices thrown near Mamdani's New York City residence during dueling protests last weekend are being investigated as part of an act of "ISIS-inspired" terrorism, according to the city's police commissioner.

President Donald Trump has blamed the recent attacks on the "genetics" of the suspects.

"They're sick people, and a lot of them were let in here. They shouldn't have been let in. Others are just bad. They go bad. Something wrong. There's something wrong there. The genetics are not exactly— they're not exactly your genetic," Trump said in an interview with Brian Kilmeade that aired Friday on Fox Radio.

At a Tuesday news conference during the House GOP's retreat in Florida, Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., was asked about the anti-Muslim rhetoric from some of his members, including Fine and Ogles.

Johnson said he has "spoken to those members and all members, as I always do, about our tone and our message."

He said there's "a lot of energy in the country, and a lot of popular sentiment that the demand to impose Sharia law in America is a serious problem."

Johnson added that it was "different language than I would use. But I think ... that's a serious issue."

Sharia law stems from the Quran and the sayings of Muhammad; it has no standing over the Constitution or state or federal laws in the U.S. When a reporter followed up and asked Johnson who was imposing Sharia law in America, he did not answer and walked off the stage.

Johnson's office did not respond to a request for comment Friday on the latest anti-Muslim social media posts from his party members following Thursday's attacks.

A GOP political operative downplayed the tweets, saying the posts from a handful of members were not reflective of the broader 218-member House Republican Conference, nor the GOP voter base.

"The loudest and often most radical voices on both the Democrat and Republican side tend to draw the most attention, but they rarely reflect the typical views of the broader conference or the voters who make up each party's base," said the GOP source, who requested anonymity to freely discuss the controversy. "The center of gravity in American politics is much quieter than the debate you see online."

Johnson and his leadership have shown no interest in punishing Fine, Ogles and others for their anti-Muslim comments, as Democrats have pushed for repercussions. It's a break from 2019, when then-Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., and his leadership team booted a conservative firebrand, then-Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, off of all of his committees after he questioned why white supremacy and white nationalism were considered "offensive."

The House GOP's campaign arm also disavowed King and stopped supporting him. He was later defeated in a Republican primary.

Democrats are expressing outrage over the anti-Muslim rhetoric from their colleagues and are preparing potential retaliatory measures, though they are long shots without GOP support.

"Randy Fine's vile racism should have already resulted in censure. I've asked before and I'm asking again: @SpeakerJohnson, will you reprimand Rep. Fine? Strip him of his committee assignments? Anything? Or does the Republican caucus condone racism?" Rep. Yassamin Ansari, D-Ariz., the first Iranian American Democrat elected to Congress, replied to Fine on X on Thursday night.

Fine responded that "Islam isn't a race" and told Ansari to "get a brain."

Rep. Shri Thanedar, D-Mich., has introduced a resolution to censure Ogles and kick him off the House Homeland Security Committee. It's unclear if Thanedar will force a floor vote on the measure.

In response to the censure resolution from Thanedar, Ogles told NBC News: "Speaking truth and facts about Islam is protected speech."

There are several Democratic lawmakers in Congress who are Muslim, including Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar, who has faced a high volume of racist attacks and violent threats since taking office. Most recently, she was attacked at a town hall in Minneapolis, though it's unclear what was the suspect's motivation.

Jewish lawmakers have also experienced violent threats and antisemitism. On Thursday, Rep. Max Miller, R-Ohio, posted a voicemail he received in which the caller said Miller is a “Jewish piece of s---” and that he hopes an Arab “cuts off your f----- head.”

“Every day as a Jewish Member of Congress is another day of receiving these types of threats,” Miller wrote in a post sharing the voicemail. “For those asking ‘Why is no one holding town halls?’...these are the people waiting for a planned event.”

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