



November 1, 2006

Governor Jeb Bush
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Sent via Fax: 850-487-0801

Re: Request to condemn hate comments by Hernando Commissioner Tom Hogan and to remove him from post

Dear Governor Bush,

It is my unfortunate duty to report to you a disturbing incident of anti-Muslim bigotry by one of your political appointees to the Hernando County Commission. The anti-Muslim statements were made by County Commissioner Tom Hogan Sr. and his wife Mary Ann Hogan. The Hogans' hateful comments were made public today, November 1, 2006, by The St. Petersburg Times.

The Times described the Hogans as the "first couple of Hernando County's Republican Party." In August of 2006, your office appointed Hogan to a vacant seat on the Hernando County Commission.

In their statements to the St Petersburg Times the Hogans called Islam a "hateful, frightening religion." They also made the following assertions:

- *"There's a saying out there, and there's some truth to it, that not all Muslims are terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims. It's their thing."-Commissioner Tom Hogan*
- *"They can call it whatever they want to, I'm calling them barbarians."-Mary Ann Hogan*
- *"Don't the administrators of this county know that in honor of Ramadan the Muslims in Iraq have killed an even greater number of our soldiers and Marines than in the preceding months?"-Mary Ann Hogan*
- *"The stated goal of the Muslim faith is to kill us, the 'infidels.' By providing county employees for their use, Hernando County is sanctioning this hateful, frightening religion."-Mary Ann Hogan*
- *"Helping to promote the Muslim religion is immoral and un-American."-Mary Ann Hogan*
- *"Even if they have gotten citizenship, they are not true Americans in my opinion. They all want to kill us."-Mary Ann Hogan*
- *Referring to Muslims Mary Ann Hogan said: "These people are trying to kill us. They want to kill us. Why can't you understand that? They say that. It's written in their bible."*

While some of the quotes were made by Mrs. Hogan, Mr. Hogan told the St. Petersburg Times "I was in the room. I know what Mary Ann said. I am in total agreement."

Our organization finds the Hogans' comments deeply disturbing. Certainly, the comments are bigoted. We call upon you and other elected officials to repudiate the ignorant anti-Muslim comments made by Mr. and Mrs. Hogan.

We also call upon you as the chief executive in the State of Florida and head of the GOP in the state to send a strong message to the public that such hate and bigotry have no place in our society by removing Mr. Hogan from the Hernando County Commission. We believe that his bias is not representative of the values held dear in Florida and America.

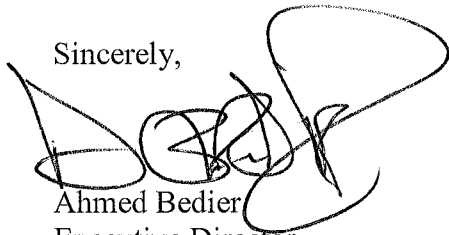
The Hogans' shameless bigotry is part of a growing trend of hate speech moving into the public discourse that our organization is tracking. Ignoring or waving off such a trend has never served our nation.

In the recent past, Rev. O'Neal Dozier, a pastor in South Florida who was appointed by your office to a Judicial Review Board, made similar hateful remarks against Islam. In that case, Rev. Dozier was removed from his position. We commend your office for removing Rev. Dozier and hope that you will act with similar decisiveness in this case and publicly repudiate the Hogans by removing Mr. Hogan from the Hernando County Commission.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is a national Muslim civil rights and advocacy group based in Washington, D.C. and with 33 offices nationwide including three in the State of Florida.

I thank you for your prompt response regarding this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ahmed Bedier', written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

Ahmed Bedier
Executive Director
Tampa Chapter