

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) today introduced to the U.S. House of the Representatives a resolution condemning the New York Police Department's ethnic and religious profiling and warrantless surveillance of Muslim Americans. The resolution was cosponsored by Reps. Judy Chu (CA-32), Keith Ellison (MN-05), Michael Honda (CA-15), Jesse Jackson, Jr. (IL-02), and Jan Schakowsky (IL-09).

"Casting suspicion on people on the basis of their race, religion, or ethnicity without any legally valid reasons is not the way we behave in America," said Rep. Holt. "Profiling in policing is a substitute for thinking."

[As first revealed in extensive reporting by the Associated Press](#), the NYPD has conducted wide-scale warrantless surveillance of Muslims throughout the country, including at mosques and businesses in New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. In many instances, the surveillance occurred in absence of any suspicion of wrongdoing – that is, organizations and individuals were surveilled solely on account of their religious affiliation.

"As Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I am appalled that the New York Police Department spied on the Muslim community," said Rep. Chu. "National security must be a priority for this country, but if we destroy those things that make America great in the process, then what are we protecting in the first place? That's why we're introducing this resolution to reaffirm the liberties and rights that make America special. We cannot lose sight of the lessons of the past, when we allowed hysteria and scapegoating to lead to the internment over 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. Back then, there were not enough voices to stand up in opposition. But today, I am here to say to the NYPD: 'This is wrong.'"

The Holt resolution is the first legislation introduced to Congress to condemn and stop the NYPD's illicit tactics. The resolution finds that:

- The NYPD has engaged in extensive surveillance and investigation of the Muslim community beyond its jurisdiction and without a reasonable, articulable basis to suspect that these individuals and groups have engaged in unlawful conduct.
- The NYPD's unreasonable suspicion-less surveillance undermines America's commitment to religious liberty and equal protection of the law, and it stigmatizes innocent members of the

Muslim community merely because of their religion – recalling other dark chapters in American history, including the internment of Japanese Americans and the illegal surveillance of civil rights and anti-war activists.

- Congress has allocated millions of dollars to the NYPD, and 34 members of Congress have sought a Justice Department investigation of the NYPD's potential violations of law.

The resolution further “condemns the unjustified surveillance and unlawful profiling of Muslim American Communities... [and] demands that the New York Police Department cease and desist with any such warrantless surveillance activities within the United States and purge its intelligence database.”

“The American Civil Liberties Union welcomes the resolution introduced by Representative Rush Holt this morning condemning the New York Police Department's unjustified surveillance and unlawful profiling of Muslim American communities,” said Laura W. Murphy, director of the Washington legislative office of the American Civil Liberties Union. “Treating mosques and ethnic businesses as suspect and monitoring Muslim students without evidence or allegations of criminal activity is unconstitutional and an affront to religious freedom. Targeting entire communities for investigation based on erroneous racial, religious, or national origin stereotypes is inefficient, ineffective, and produces flawed intelligence. The Justice Department should heed the numerous calls—from Representative Holt, 33 other members of Congress, and over 100 organizations from affected communities—and investigate NYPD's surveillance abuses.”

“As Representative Holt's resolution makes clear, the NYPD's use of ethnic and religious profiling has compromised basic Constitutional protections,” said Dr. James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute. “In the process, they have also put at risk important efforts to build relationships between law enforcement and New York's Arab American and Muslim communities, relationships which have been crucial in foiling actual terrorist plots. While the NYPD has been all too willing to sacrifice these essential American freedoms, Rep. Holt's resolution provides an important corrective.”

On Wednesday evening, in a separate effort to block the NYPD's profiling activities, Rep. Holt offered an amendment to the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Act of 2013 that would have barred federal funds from being used to conduct ethnic or religious profiling. The amendment was endorsed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Interfaith Alliance, Americans United, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the National Immigration Law Center, and People

for the American Way. It received significant bipartisan support, including the votes of 16 Republicans, but ultimately was defeated on a 193 to 232 vote.

The resolution is expected to be referred to the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary for further consideration.