Institute *for* Social Policy *and* Understanding

Canaries in a Coal Mine: Islamophobia Is a Threat to All

ISPU: Research Making an Impact

- **Building Bridges: Public Policy**

  – Bolster American democracy by strengthening the contribution by American Muslims

- **Catalyzing Community Development: Social Policy**

  – Improve the social and economic welfare of all Americans by strengthening the American Muslim community and its ability to contribute fully to America's growth

- **Fostering Scholarship: Thought Leadership**

  – Strengthen America's intellectual leadership by leading innovative thinking for and about the American Muslim community

Election Night 2012 Epiphany

"The white establishment is now the minority...And the voters, many of them, feel that the economic system is stacked against them and they want stuff. You are going to see a tremendous Hispanic vote for President Obama. Overwhelming black vote for President Obama. And women will probably break President Obama's way. People feel that they are entitled to things and which candidate, between the two, is going to give them things?"

"The demographics are changing...It's not a traditional America anymore."

Bill O'Reilly, Fox News Election Night Coverage, November 6, 2012

Islamophobia & 2050

Impetus for the Study

- Majority-minority nation (2043)

- Demographic shifts

  - Non-white birth rate outpaced (2010)

  - Non-Protestant majority (2012)

- Social & political gains by "suspect groups"

- Legislative efforts to preserve "majority" power

- Locate anti-Muslim legislation within public debate

Methodology

Issue Areas

- Voter Identification
- Immigration
- Abortion Rights/Access
- Anti-LGBTQ
- Right-to-Work
- Anti-Shariah/Anti-Foreign Law
- Anti-Refugee

Sources & Parameters

- Primary legislative searches in all 50 States
- Timeframe:
  - Anti-shariah legislation 2011-2017
  - Anti-refugee legislation 2016-2017
- Closed & open datasets
- Interviews with experts
- Bill content judged on its final status

What is Wrong with Anti-Muslim Legislation?

- **Unfairly limits American Muslim legal rights**

- **Threatens legal and religious rights of other Americans**

- **Used as a smoke screen for curtailing the rights of other communities**
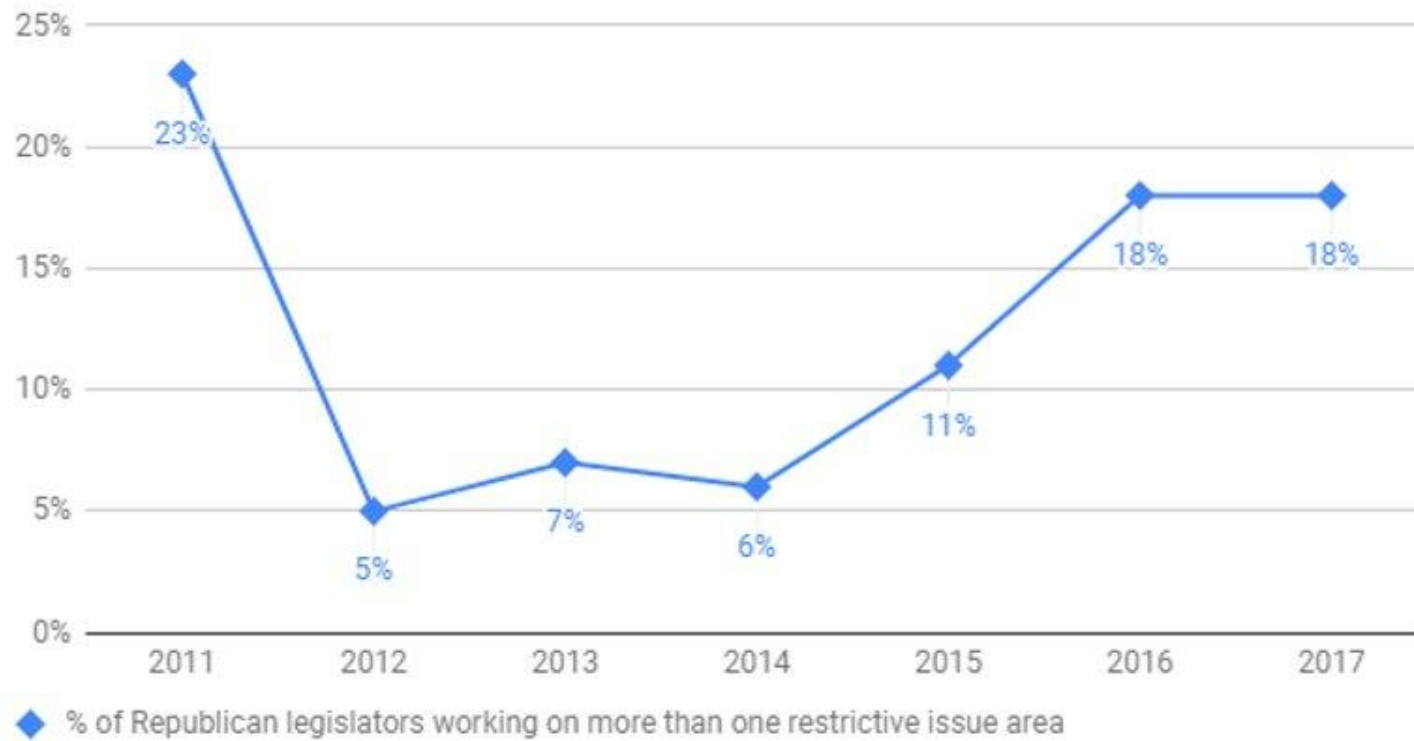
- **Feeds a narrative of fear**

Findings: General

- Between 2011-2017, anti-Muslim legislation was overwhelmingly supported by Republican lawmakers:

	% Republican Support	% Democrat Support
Anti-shariah	97%	3%
Anti-refugee	96%	4%

- "Red" states, or states dominated by Republicans, have the most restrictive agendas

- Only 13% (2011-2017) and 18% (2017) of Republican state legislators are "overlap" lawmakers involved in supporting more than one of these restrictive laws

Findings – General Over Time

Between 2016 and 2017, the proportion of Republican legislators working on more than one restrictive issue area remained steady

◆ % of Republican legislators working on more than one restrictive issue area

Findings: Anti-Shariah Bills

- Among legislators supporting anti-shariah bills, 78% (2011-2017) and 85% (2017) also support other restrictive bills.

- 168 (2011-2017) and 119 (2017) Republican state lawmakers across the country, 4% (2011-2017) and 3% (2017), have sponsored or co-sponsored an anti-shariah/anti-foreign law bill

- Between 2011 and 2017, the greatest overlap with anti-shariah/anti-foreign law legislation was with anti-abortion, anti-immigration, and voter ID laws

Findings: Anti-Shariah Bills Over Time

After 2 years of steady increase, the number of "overlap" legislators declined slightly between 2016 and 2017.
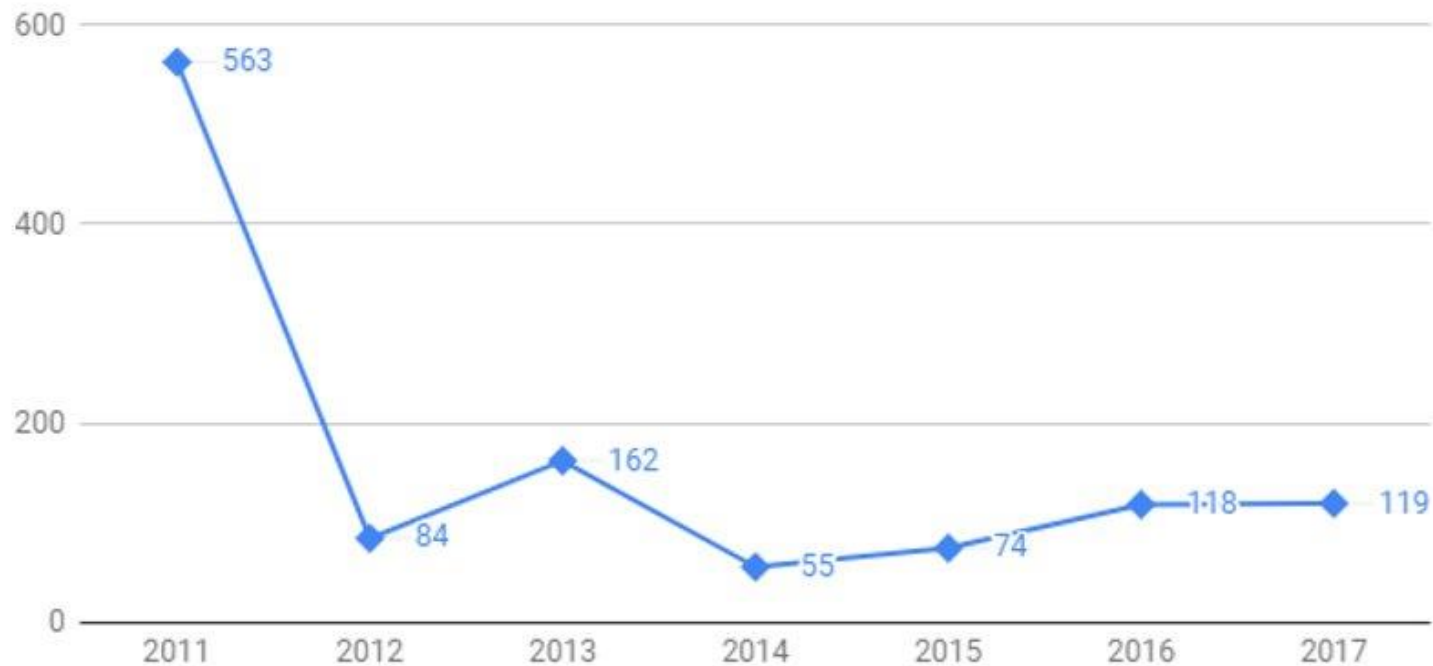
Among legislators who support anti-shariah bills, % who also support bills in other restrictive issue areas

Findings: Anti-Shariah Bills Over Time

Since 2011, there has been a sharp decline in the number of Republican lawmakers who support anti-shariah/anti-foreign law bills

◆ # of Republican lawmakers who have sponsored/co-sponsored an anti-sharia/anti-foriegn law bill

Findings: Anti-Refugee Bills

- Among legislators supporting anti-refugee bills, 75% (2016-2017) and 64% (2017) also support other restrictive bills.

- 346 (2016-2017) and 81 (2017) Republican state lawmakers across the country, 4% (2016-2017) and 2% (2017), have sponsored or co-sponsored an anti-refugee bill

- Between 2016 and 2017, the greatest overlap with anti-refugee legislation is with anti-abortion and anti-immigration laws

The "Curious" Case of North Carolina

2013 Family, Faith & Freedom Protection Act (HB695):

- **Promoted as anti-shariah bill to prevent Islamic law implementation in North Carolina: Prevents state judges from considering "foreign law" in family court proceedings (e.g. divorce, alimony, child custody)**

- **Added anti-abortion provisions:**
  - Abortion clinics must meet standards of surgical centers
  - Mandate physicians (not just trained technicians under remote supervision of doctor) be present during chemical abortions
  - Require clinics to have transfer agreements with local hospitals
  - Restrict health care coverage of abortion
  - "Conscience Provision" allows any healthcare provider to opt out of providing abortion related services

Implications

- **Muslims are part of a changing America, rather than seen as an invading body, despite the rhetoric around shariah**

- **For the Muslim Population:**
  - Increase self-awareness & education on the 6 other issue areas
  - Take a step back and reassess the political context
  - Explore potential intersections with other issues while maintaining your organizational mission
  - Engage the 3-4% of Republican legislators that are supporting anti-Muslim legislation

Implications

- **For the Broader Population:**
  – Develop and gain a contextual understanding of Muslim demographics and related issues
  – Recognize potential organizations and communities that have experienced similar strategies of targeted legislation
  – Identify and integrate the Muslim-impact component of wider legislative and policy concerns
  – Locate and engage with existing and emerging pockets of Muslim power across the country

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www.ispu.org/visualization

www.ispu.org/islamophobia