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House of Representatives

OPENING OF THE MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL TRUST COMMUNITY CENTER, TIGARD OREGON

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI
OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2015

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the grand opening of the Muslim Educational Trust Community Center in my district.

I recently had the honor of attending the ceremony and thanking Wajdi Said and the Muslim Educational Trust Center's Board of Directors for their leadership and hard work to establish this important Community Center.

Now more than ever, our country needs organizations like the Muslim Educational Trust, whose work for the betterment of society—through education, cooperation, tolerance, and public awareness—transcends faith and bridges differences. The MET is educating the next generation of Muslim leaders and in the process, enhancing relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Oregonians.

Like most, I condemn the hateful, closed-minded, anti-Muslim rhetoric that has infiltrated our public discourse. Equally disturbing are the reports of violence against Muslim Americans and their places of worship. Hate speech has always characterized darker periods of our history and these episodes will be similarly judged.

Just recently, on the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution's 13th Amendment abolishing slavery, President Obama gave a poignant speech in which he described the long struggle that ended slavery, and the battle for civil rights and basic freedoms that followed.

The victories won by previous generations of enlightened Americans have had far-reaching effects. However, discrimination remains prevalent and has manifested itself in an attack on religious freedom.

During his speech, President Obama remarked, "We betray the efforts of the past if we fail to push back against bigotry in all its forms." And he's right—we have an obligation to our nation, itself a protest against oppression, to speak up for the freedoms and safety of our friends and neighbors.

President Obama also said, "Our freedom is bound up with the freedom of others—regardless of what they look like or where they come from or what their last name is or what faith they practice." In the United States, this notion is fundamental and an important part of what distinguishes us from many other countries.

The Muslim Educational Trust Community Center will continue to open its doors to all of its neighbors, enlightening minds and building bridges of friendship among Muslim and non-Muslim Oregonians. I am pleased to extend my congratulations and pledge support against bigotry in all its forms.
