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Statement on the Imran Awan Case

Washington, DC: The attacks on Mr. Awan and his family began as part of a frenzy of anti-Muslim bigotry in the literal heart of our democracy, the House of Representatives. For months we have had utterly unsupported, outlandish, and slanderous statements targeting Mr. Awan coming not just from the ultra-right-wing “pizzagate” media but from sitting members of congress. Now we have the Justice Department showing up with a complaint about disclosures on a modest real estate matter. To an extent, the situation speaks for itself.

Mr. Awan’s family is presently staying with extended family in Pakistan because he and his wife were both abruptly and unjustly fired, leaving them without a reliable source of income to pay typical U.S. living expenses, and because extremist right-wing bloggers were beginning to harass them and their children—even going to their children’s schools. Mr. Awan has stayed in the U.S. to earn some income to manage this situation as best as possible. He attempted to travel this week to see his family for the first time in months. The government had been informed he would travel and had stated no objection. Yet on Monday night he was hastily arrested at Dulles airport.

Because we are confident in the integrity of the U.S. justice system, we are confident that Mr. Awan will soon be able to clear his name and get on with his life. Neither Mr. Awan nor his wife have ever had any intention to “flee” the United States. They are U.S. citizens who have built a full life and have a strong community life in this country. They will stand and fight whatever charges are presented. Once they have prevailed, we will have a chance to more closely examine the ugly political and media dynamics that have driven this controversy from the beginning.