A Letter from a Coordinator

As-Salaam-Alaikum, I am honored to have a chance to speak at this gathering. My name is Ayaz Aslam, I am a board member of American Muslim for Democracy. AMD is a fairly new organization that started in Middlesex County to educate American Muslims about the need for civic engagement and participation in the political process. As we started to expand the network into other counties we came across many other Muslim organizations working towards similar goals but there was no collaboration at a higher level. At that time we realized that the best way to move forward is to work together towards a common goal of voter registration and to get out to vote.

Since March of 2015, we started to successfully build a coalition between various Muslim political, social and cultural organizations.

Our first meeting was held in September 2015 and 5 organizations attended that meeting. Our next meeting is planned for February 21st and inshallah we will have representation from 30 organizations.

The newly formed Umbrella organization's objectives are to collectively address common issues and concerns of the community from a political perspective, as well as, benefit from each other's knowledge and experiences. We want to utilize resources currently available and successfully use them to promote "voting power". We need to be engaged in politics at all levels.

We are probably the most diverse group. Our common challenges are overcoming the cultural differences, addressing the generational gap, lack of women and youth involvement and most importantly changing the mind set.

In some estimated over 400K Muslims live in NJ with less than 25% registered voters. We not only need your active participation but, we are also requesting that you reach out to other Muslim social, cultural, and religious organizations and encourage them to join this Umbrella organization to show unity and strength.

Since there was a lot of energy and eagerness to participate in this coalition we wanted to build on that momentum. We went ahead and developed 5 teams with the specific goal of taking us to the next level. These teams will be meeting on weekly or bi-weekly basis and presenting their progress report in our monthly meetings.

Please allow me to emphasize that there is no interest in reinventing the wheel. All organizations will continue to work within their community as they have been doing for the past several years. This umbrella organization is only a collaborative effort to create a centralized Muslim Voters data base and to represent all NJ American Muslims with one voice.

Our ultimate goal is education, political awareness, voter registration and to get out the vote.

I thank you for your time and request your continuous support with this project.