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## Public Policy in the 2016 Election

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### Op-Ed Piece 1

Donald Trump and many other Republican candidates are both right and wrong when it comes to issues relating to the Islamic world. So far, the 2016 election has been one for the ages. What many point out about the election is that there has been more rhetoric of what many would consider to be of Islamophobic nature. Without a doubt, when this topic is brought up in a conversation, the first name brought up is that of Donald Trump. Mr. Trump's remarks from early in his campaign about Muslims has caused a mass public outrage in the United States, even though his comments seem to have had little impact on the Republican primary so far. When we examine what we consider to be Islamophobic rhetoric, we must always apply the same criteria.

First off, Mr. Trump's first incident of large criticism occurred with his initial immigration plans, a majority of which dealt with immigration from Mexico. His rhetoric in regards to most immigration issues was always firm and tough. Trump later proposed a ban against all Muslims entering the country shortly after the attacks in Paris, which mirrored his hard line stance that he took against Mexican immigrants. Many other Republican candidates also supported bans on Syrian refugees entering the country, a move that many touted as a security issue and not a human rights issue. In my opinion, Mr. Trump is entirely wrong in his desires, while I very much support not allowing Syrian refugees to enter the country. In my opinion, the issue is strictly based in the constitutionality of the desired actions. Mr. Trump

wants to ban Muslims for what appears to be varied reasons. He says said “I think Muslims hate us” (Bruton), while at the same time advocating for surveillance of any Muslims that do enter the United States (Goldman). I believe his plan to be entirely unconstitutional. First off, by banning Muslims, Mr. Trump prevents a Muslim from accessing their First Amendment rights. Any immigration plan that excludes people on the basis of religion is unconstitutional because it would imply a national religion. Mr. Trump also would prevent immigrants from accessing their rights of due process, especially if a U.S citizen is not allowed back into the country.

What is constitutional from the Republican candidates is a ban on Syrian refugees. Many on the left hail it as a human rights issue. To me, this is no more than a national security problem. The president’s main role is to keep the nation safe, and immigration policy that targets people because of a security risk they can pose is not Islamophobic, nor is it unconstitutional. The policy is just because we know nothing about the people we would be taking in. There is no possible way to vet all the people that would be coming into the country. If a president were to take any such action, the action would not violate a constitutional right, seeing as these are not United States citizens. One thing I find truly interesting is that this policy is so closely tied to what many people call Islamophobic. Former President Jimmy Carter did the exact same thing when he banned Iranians from entering the country in the tail end of his administration. There was no mass outcry over this being Islamophobic, and it was not given the same strict criteria that we see today.

Candidates have been all over the place when it comes to general rhetoric about Islam. As I stated before, Mr. Trump has said that Islam hates us, and what I find truly fascinating is that Islam must have grown some sort of brain and emotions and began to hate Americans. Clearly, anyone with half a brain can understand that a religion cannot hate someone seeing as it is an

inanimate object. Former candidate Rick Santorum has argued that Islam is essentially incapable of allowing its followers to have basic human rights (Jenkins). What Santorum misses is the fact that the religion is often used as a proxy for control by dictatorial regimes and does not embody the beliefs of many Muslims throughout the world.

Looking forward, we all need to take initiative to look at facts and understand our own Constitution. We must understand that the world is complex and that by using religion as a scapegoat, we often exacerbate problems. We must always fight to be a nation that pushes for everyone to achieve something in their lives.

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