

# Islamophobia is Pervasive, Systemic, and a Threat to All



## Introduction

For more than 20 years, the **Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)** has conducted and shared research on American Muslims and the issues impacting upon Muslim communities in the United States. Since 2016, that research has included several editions of the [American Muslim Poll](#), which captures the attitudes, opinions, and lived experiences of Muslims, alongside Americans of other or no faith. These studies, taken together, provide a robust understanding of the prevalence, manifestations, and consequences of anti-Muslim bigotry as well as responses to it. What follows is a snapshot of what we currently know based on key findings of select reports.

## Islamophobia is Pervasive, Institutionalized, and a Threat to All

### *Islamophobia is Pervasive:*

- Anti-Muslim discrimination has been [sustained at high levels](#) for many years with the [majority \(62%\)](#) of Muslim adults experiencing it each year.
- [Interpersonal discrimination](#) experienced by Muslims is common and pervasive with Muslims being the most likely faith group to report experiencing it when interacting with co-workers (43%) or with others on social media (56%).
- Children are not immune. [Nearly half of Muslim families](#) with school-age children have at least one child experiencing religious-based bullying.

### *Islamophobia is Institutionalized:*

What is very unique to Muslims is the [level of institutionalized and systemic Islamophobia](#) they experience, which takes many forms:

- **Banking:** [Muslims are the most likely faith group to face banking challenges](#) (27%). These challenges are not simply limited to personal accounts, but also experienced by nonprofits and businesses.
- **Legal system:** Muslims experience high levels of [discrimination when interacting with law enforcement](#) (38% of those who say they have experienced discrimination). Additionally, in instances of ideologically motivated

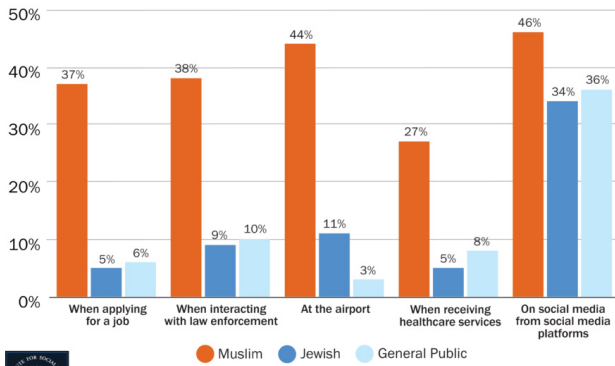
violence, accused [Muslim-perceived defendants face far greater legal consequences](#) than their non-Muslim perceived (white supremacist or anti-government) counterparts accused of a similar crime or plot, and receive more media coverage and public communication from the Department Of Justice.

- **Airports/travel:** [Muslims are twice as likely](#) as the general public to face secondary screening when entering the United States (30% vs. 12%). This is especially true for those who are visibly Muslim.
- **Places of worship:** In the past decade (2010-2019), [35% of mosques encountered significant resistance](#) from their neighborhood or city when they tried to obtain permission to move, expand, or build. This increased from 25% between 1980-2009.
- **Political participation:** Muslims are more than [twice as likely as the general public to face obstacles to voting](#) (46% vs. 19%).
- **Healthcare and Employment:** Among Muslims who have experienced discrimination in the past year, a [significant number experienced it when applying for a job \(37% vs. 6% of the general public\) and when receiving healthcare \(27% vs. 8% of the general public\)](#).
- **Social media:** [Nearly half of Muslims](#) (46% versus 36% for the general public) report facing discrimination from social media platforms themselves, which could include having messages removed, accounts closed, or being kicked off a platform.

### *Islamophobia is a Threat to All:*

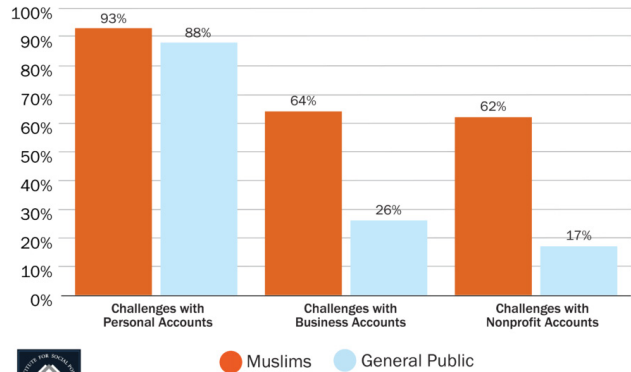
- Islamophobia is a threat to democracy. Those who harbor anti-Muslim sentiment are [more likely to approve of discriminatory policies](#) targeting Muslims and agree to limit democratic freedoms when the country is under threat.
- Islamophobia is but a “branch on the tree of -isms,” with the same roots, empirically linked to antisemitism and anti-Black racism.
- Harms of Islamophobia are not confined to Muslims, but also those perceived to be Muslim.
- Institutionalized Islamophobia can contribute to interpersonal Islamophobia, signaling acceptance from the top down.
- Manifestations of Islamophobia hinder individual potential and community development among Muslims.

## Muslims Most Likely Group to Face Discrimination in Institutional Settings



**Figure 44:** For each of the following situations, please tell me if you experienced religious discrimination in the last year. How about... (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who experienced religious discrimination in the past year, 2022.

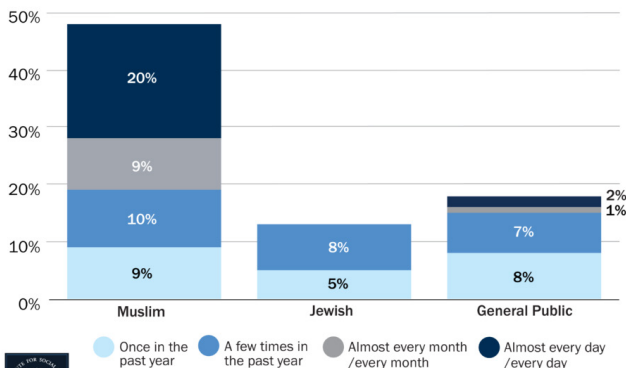
## Muslims More Likely than General Public to Face Challenges with Business and Nonprofit Accounts



**Figure 5:** What type of challenges have you faced? Base: Total respondents who have ever faced challenges from U.S. banking/financial institutions, 2022.

## Nearly Half of Muslim Families Report a Child Has Faced Religious-Based Bullying

One in Five Muslim Families Report a Child Facing Bullying Almost Every Day



**Figure 46:** How often, if at all, have your children experienced bullying, such as insults or physical assaults in the past year because of their religion at school? Base: Total respondents with school-aged children, 2022.

### Tools for Responding to Islamophobia:

- [Countering and Dismantling Islamophobia: A Comprehensive Guide for Individuals and Organizations](#)
- [Four Data-Driven Ways to Combat Islamophobia](#)
- [Countering Anti-Muslim Opposition to Mosque and Islamic Center Construction and Expansion](#)
- [ISPU's Islamophobia Index](#)

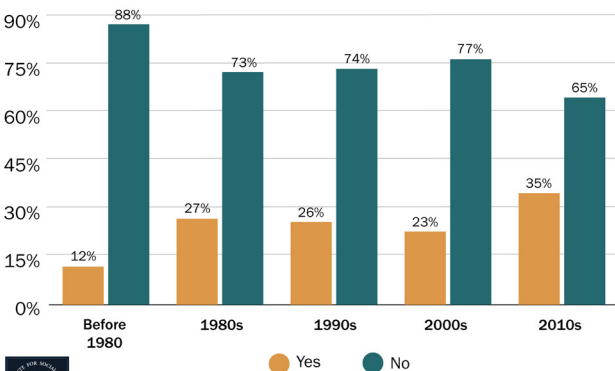
## About the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)

### The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)

provides objective research and education about American Muslims to support well-informed dialogue and decision-making. Since 2002, ISPU has been at the forefront of discovering trends and opportunities that impact American Muslim communities. Our research aims to educate the general public and equip community change agents, the media, policymakers, and others to make evidence-based decisions. In addition to building in-house capacity, ISPU has assembled leading experts across multiple disciplines, building a solid reputation as a trusted source for information for and about American Muslims.

We are happy to answer questions or discuss these data further in any capacity. Additional research and expert insight is available at [ISPU.org](http://ISPU.org) and by contacting us at [info@ispu.org](mailto:info@ispu.org).

## Highest Levels of Mosque Opposition Occurred in the Past Decade



**Figure 8:** If your masjid went to the city or zoning board to obtain permission to build, move, or expand, was there significant resistance in the general community to your move, expansion, or building?