

LAURA LOOMER

IMPACT: Laura Loomer is a white American far-right activist who is currently the Republican candidate for the U.S. House of Representative in Florida's Twenty-First Congressional District. Loomer has described Islam as a "cancer on society," and has promoted inflammatory and prejudicial conspiracy theories about Islam and Muslims. She has been banned from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, PayPal, and other technology platforms for sharing hate speech targeting Muslims.

- **In September 2014, as an undergraduate student at Barry University in southern Florida, Laura Loomer alerted the far-right political blog *Gateway Pundit* to the presence of an imam at a September 11 commemoration event on the university's campus.** When questioned about her motivations, Loomer said, "We live in a Judeo-Christian country, and they let the imam open up the ceremony... He was literally chanting 'Allahu Akbar.' That's not cool, because that's what the terrorists were chanting." **In April 2015, Loomer was suspended from Barry University after secretly recording a video while telling a university instructor that she wanted to "begin the process of forming an on-campus organization that would support ISIS."** Loomer partnered with Project Veritas, a far-right investigative media outlet that publishes undercover video and audio recordings, and its president is James O'Keefe.
- **Following graduation Loomer worked for Project Veritas,** which has been described in *The Guardian* as a "discredited rightwing attack organization" known for, according to VICE, "outlandish, selectively edited undercover videos." O'Keefe, the project's founder, has likewise been criticized in the *Washington Post* as a "right-wing fraudster." **In a Project Veritas video published in November 2016, Loomer appears dressed in a black abaya and hijab and attempts to vote as former Hillary Clinton staffer Huma Abedin.** The video is interspersed with separate footage of Loomer speaking with Alan Shulkin, Commissioner of the Board of Elections in New York City. **In the footage, Shulkin and Loomer discuss how they think "Muslims can use burqas as a way to commit political fraud." Shulkin also states that, "[Muslims] detonate bombs in public schools, which we are using. That could disrupt the whole election."**
- After the New York City truck bombing in November 2017 that killed eight and wounded dozens, Loomer published a series of anti-Muslim tweets. **Loomer described herself as a "proud Islamophobe," described Muslims as "s*vages" who "ruin everything," and asked a Muslim journalist wearing hijab to "disavow" the attack. Loomer referred to Islam as "cancer" and stated, "We should never let another Muslim into the civilized world."** She also used the hashtag "#BanIslam" and proclaimed that, "There's no such thing as a moderate Muslim. They're ALL the same." She further tweeted, **"Someone needs to create a non-Islamic version of Uber or Lyft because I never want to support another Islamic immigrant driver."** Loomer was consequently banned from both Uber and Lyft for breaking both platforms' community guidelines regarding discrimination on the basis of religion.
- **After leaving Project Veritas in June 2017, Loomer joined the Rebel Media, a far-right Canadian media organization with a history of targeting Muslims.** Broadcasting from New York for the "March Against Sharia," an anti-Sharia march organized by anti-Muslim ACT for America in twenty cities throughout the United States in June 2017, **Loomer claimed that there is "no such thing as an Islamic feminist" and placed a niqab on the Fearless Girl statue in the city's financial district.** In another video for *Rebel Media* at the same anti-Sharia march, Loomer stated, **"Sharia law is our enemy, and not just members of ISIS are practicing Sharia law."** Loomer referenced a study published by the anti-Muslim Center for Security Policy (CSP) that claimed 51 percent of American Muslims want Sharia to be

established in the United States. Loomer also argued with queer antifascist protestors about “what they do to queers in those Islamic countries,” interspersed with graphic videos of what appears to be Da’esh murdering gay Muslims. During the video, featured text references the growth of an “Islamic fifth column” in the United States, a conspiracy theory applied in this instance to Muslims as “a devious enemy secretly undermining the very nation in which they live.” Loomer’s references to the “fifth column” mirror similar language used by the CSP.

- **In March 2018, Loomer’s media credentials were revoked and she was removed the following day from the federal courthouse in Orlando during the trial of Noor Salman. According to the Huffington Post, Loomer “harassed the defendant’s family outside the courthouse with questions about Muslims, jihad and Easter.”** Salman is the widow and domestic violence survivor of the Pulse nightclub shooter. Salman was arrested on charges that included aiding her former husband and abuser, and was kept in solitary confinement and separated from her young son for a year leading up to the trial. She was acquitted of all charges by a jury.
- **From November 2018 to April 2019, Loomer serially targeted Somali American Muslim U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN) on social media and in person.** In November 2018, Loomer was banned permanently from Twitter for violating its rules against hateful conduct after publishing tweets alleging that Rep. Omar was “anti-Jewish” and “pro-Sharia.” In August 2018, Loomer forcibly confronted Representatives Omar and Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), a Palestinian American Muslim woman, at a campaign event, declaring that, “She [Tlaib] needs to decide whether she’s an American or a Muslim first. Is she a Palestinian or is she an American first?” **In April 2019, Loomer published an Instagram post accusing Omar of “only pushing for another 9/11” and cautioned her followers to fight against Omar to “prevent the establishment of a caliphate.” In a separate Instagram story published the same month, Loomer announced, “I just have to say that I truly hate Ilhan Omar.”** During the course of the video, Loomer went on to describe Islam as a “cancer on society” and **argued, “Muslims should not even be allowed to seek positions of political office in this country.”** After numerous videos published by Loomer attracted controversy for violating Instagram and Facebook’s rules on dangerous individuals and the propagation of hate speech, both platforms permanently banned Loomer in May 2019.
- Loomer has ties to other far-right, anti-Muslim, and white nationalist activists. In a video published on Tarek Fatah’s Toronto Sun column in October 2018, **Loomer joined an anti-Sharia protest with white nationalist Canadian political activist and failed Toronto mayoral candidate Faith Goldy.** Goldy is a self-described “Christian nationalist” who in 2017 publicly recited the 14 Words white supremacist slogan. **Loomer has previously served as a writer for anti-Muslim activist Pamela Geller’s American Freedom Defense Initiative (AFDI) and Geller Report. In February 2019, Loomer was banned from PayPal over her connections to The United West (TUW), a group whose stated mission is “defending and advancing Western Civilization against the kinetic and cultural onslaught of Shariah Islam.”** Loomer has also solicited personal donations to a PO box address identical to that of TUW.
- In August 2019, Loomer announced a 2020 bid for Florida’s Twenty-First Congressional District. **In her “Make American Safe Again” campaign video, Loomer singled out Muslim members of Congress Rep. Omar and Rep. Tlaib, pledging to “expose, confront, and combat the anti-American radicals who are trying to make the blaming and hatred of America the norm.” Loomer additionally accused Rep. Omar of “support[ing] terrorists who want to kill Americans.”** Loomer has been endorsed by two sitting U.S. representatives, Paul Gosar (R-AZ) and Matt Gaetz (R-FL), far-right columnist Michelle Malkin, Fox News host Jeanine Pirro, and the white supremacist website VDare.

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- In March 2019, Loomer was banned from the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) for attempting to approach reporters from the *Daily Beast*, *CNN*, and the *Huffington Post* to challenge their coverage of social media sites' banning Loomer and their representation of her as an anti-Muslim bigot. **After being banned from CPAC, Loomer was interviewed by white nationalist Faith Goldy, and the two spoke about their shared past of "busting up...Jihadi conferences" in Toronto.** Chris Mathias of the *Huffington Post* reported that Loomer posed for a picture and talked with white supremacist and outgoing-U.S. Representative Steve King (R-IA) at CPAC. They also reportedly exchanged numbers and King reportedly told Loomer, "Text me."
- Loomer is a supporter of President Donald Trump's immigration policies. **In January 2019, Loomer protested Rep. Nancy Pelosi's opposition to the border wall by setting up an "illegal immigrant sanctuary" on the front lawn of Pelosi's home in California, which Loomer referred to as "Casa de Nancy."** According to the *Daily Beast*, Loomer **"tricked three men she described as undocumented immigrants into joining her, setting them up for an inevitable confrontation with police."** When the police did not arrest the men, one of Loomer's associates yelled, "Catch and release." Also in January 2019, **Loomer was arrested for trespassing onto the front lawn of California Governor Gavin Newsom, dressed in a stereotypical Indigenous-Mexican poncho and sombrero. She described the stunt as a "fiesta"** and stated that Governor Newsom "cares more about illegals than Americans." On her website, Loomer and her staff have published multiple anti-immigration articles, including coverage of her racist stunts at Rep. Pelosi's home and coverage of *Fox News* host Tucker Carlson describing Rep. Ilhan Omar on his show as "living proof that the way we practice immigration has become dangerous to this country."
- **Loomer has been a plaintiff in at least two lawsuits in response to her ban from multiple social media platforms.** In April 2019, Loomer filed a lawsuit (*Illoominate Media, Inc., et al v. CAIR Florida, Inc., et al*) against the Florida chapter of the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the largest Muslim civil rights group in the United States and on Twitter. The lawsuit accused CAIR-Florida of "tortious interference with an advantageous business relationship" between Loomer and Twitter. Many of the claims in the lawsuit stem from a "prank" by leftists who posed as Twitter employees and sent Loomer false information that Twitter leadership had met with representatives of CAIR leading up to her deplatforming. **In November 2019, Loomer lost the lawsuit after the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida dismissed the case, describing it as, "to put it mildly, nonsensical."** In August 2018, Freedom Watch filed a class action suit lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia against Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Apple, accusing the social media platforms of "intentionally and willfully suppress[ing] politically conservative content," "censorship," and violating the First Amendment, antitrust laws, and DC's Human Rights Act. In November 2018, Freedom Watch amended the complaint to add Loomer as a lead plaintiff. **In March 2019, the court dismissed the lawsuit, and in May 2020, Loomer and Freedom Watch lost their appeal.**
- **In August 2020, Laura Loomer won the Republican primary election for Florida's Twenty-First Congressional District with 42.5 percent of the vote. The twenty-first district includes President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort—his and First Lady Melania Trump's registered voter location. President Trump congratulated Loomer on her win, quoting a tweet by anti-Muslim political activist Raheem Kassam: "Great going Laura. You have a great chance against a Pelosi puppet!"** President Trump further tweeted one day later, quoting a tweet in support of Loomer by Florida Member of

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Congress Matt Gaetz, stating, “Big win Matt!” Leading up to her primary win, Loomer’s campaign had raised over \$1.1 million.

- **To celebrate her primary win, Loomer hosted a party attended by “longtime Trump adviser Roger Stone, convicted last year of witness tampering and lying to Congress; disgraced former Breitbart columnist Milo Yiannopoulos; and Gavin McInnes, the founder of the neo-fascist street gang the Proud Boys.”** Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Loomer hosted “several hundred people” indoors at the Hilton Hotel by the West Palm Beach airport and attendees did not appear to be taking appropriate safety measures.
- **Loomer’s congressional campaign maintains strong ties to President Trump’s 2016 and 2020 election campaigns.** Loomer’s campaign manager is Karen Giorno, who previously worked for Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign. According to reporting in *Mediaite* the Trump campaign utilized Loomer’s email list in January 2020 in order to fundraise for his 2020 re-election campaign. In December 2019, Trump-ally U.S. Representative Jim Jordan (R-OH) also used Loomer’s email list to fundraise in the run-up to the congressional impeachment of President Trump. **According to reporting in Vox, in December 2019, “President Trump retweeted a Loomer supporter calling for donations to her campaign.”**
- **According to reporting in the Forward, a U.S. news publication with a Jewish American audience, “Loomer is one of the few women — and one of only a handful of Jews — in the far right’s cast of characters. She is styling herself as a media voice that trumpets Jewish causes in one breath and decries ‘Muslim “refugee” predators’ in the next. ... She’s part of a Twitter-savvy crew of Trump fans that are trying to use the tactics of the “alt-right” — memes, social media targeting and aggressive misinformation — to purge the far right of pervasive antisemitism while upholding the sanctity of white European culture.”** **While Loomer has described white nationalist Richard Spencer as an antisemite, she has expressed a belief in his freedom of speech and has posed for a photo with him.** **According to the Forward, “white identity is important to Loomer,” and Loomer has stated her appreciation for white nationalists’ “efforts to preserve European culture and civilization.”**
- **Loomer has publicly advocated violence against Muslims, migrants, and refugees of color.** In July 2017, Loomer celebrated the deaths of 2,000 migrants who died crossing the Mediterranean sea, tweeting, “Good. [clapping hand emoji] Here’s to 2,000 more.” Loomer further **described Muslim migrants and refugees of color as “coming into the western world illegally and spreading Islam like AIDS and refusing to assimilate and raping our women.”** Following the Ōtautahi/Christchurch massacre in March 2019 in Aotearoa/New Zealand, in which fifty-one Muslims were murdered while praying in mosques by a white nationalist gunman who live streamed his horrific attack on Facebook, Loomer wrote on Telegram (an encrypted instant messaging platform, as she had been banned by Twitter and Facebook at that point), **“Nobody cares about Christchurch. I especially don’t. I care about my social media accounts and the fact that Americans are being silenced more than Christchurch.”**