

TED CRUZ

IMPACT: Ted Cruz is a Republican senator from Texas who is widely known for his controversial stance on immigration and his connections to purveyors of anti-Muslim rhetoric, most notably Frank Gaffney and ACT for America.

- Senator Ted Cruz has served as a junior Senator from Texas since 2013. Before this, Cruz practiced law in Texas and served as George W. Bush's presidential campaign policy adviser in 2000 and as solicitor general of Texas from 2003 to 2008.
- In 2016, he **ran for the President of the United States** and lost the Party nomination to Donald Trump. During his campaign, **Ted Cruz listed Frank Gaffney among his five national security advisers. Gaffney is the founder of the anti-Muslim think tank Center for Security Policy (CSP).** When questioned about his decision, **Cruz called Gaffney “a serious thinker who has been focused on fighting jihadists, fighting jihadism across the globe.”** In addition to Gaffney, Cruz listed three other CSP officials on his team of advisers. A 2016 article in *The Nation* found that **Andrew McCarthy and Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin, “both of whom traffic in Shariah conspiracy theories,” were also included on Cruz’s list of advisers.**
- In November 2017, **Cruz was honored at CSP’s annual Keeper of the Flame Dinner.** During his speech, he urged attendees to “continue shining light on the existential threat that jihadists, that Islamists pose [and] to call them by their name and to stand up and defeat them.”
- In 2015 during the presidential campaign, **Cruz rejected fellow candidate Donald Trump’s proposal to ban Muslims from the United States, but stated that “everyone understands why Donald has suggested what he has.”** During the primaries, **Cruz proposed a similar plan calling for a “three-year moratorium on refugees from countries with a strong al-Qaeda or Islamic State influence.”** In 2017 following President Donald Trump’s executive order banning citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries, **Cruz commended Trump “for acting swiftly to try to prevent terrorists from infiltrating our refugee programs.”**
- In November 2015, **Cruz said in an interview on Fox News that America should vet Christian and Muslim refugees differently and send Muslims to Muslim-majority countries while “providing safe haven” for Christian refugees.**
- Cruz later defended his statement on *ABC News* by saying, “I intend to introduce legislation this week in the U.S. Senate to prevent tens of thousands of Syrian Muslim refugees...from Middle Eastern countries. We should not be allowing Muslim refugees from countries where ISIS and al Qaeda have control of significant amounts of territory because of the inability of this administration, the inability of our intelligence sources to distinguish between who is and is not an ISIS terrorist.”
- Following the San Bernardino attack in December 2015, Cruz criticized then President Barack Obama’s response to the incident. President Obama called the attack an “act of terrorism” motivated by “a perverted interpretation of Islam” but cautioned Americans, stating, “We cannot turn against one another by letting this fight be defined as a war between America and Islam.” Cruz stated President Obama “spent a significant portion of his Sunday address as an apologist for radical Islamic terrorism.”
- In March 2016, following the bombings at the Zaventem International Airport and the Maelbeek metro station in Brussels, Belgium, **Cruz’s campaign released a press statement on his Facebook page.** It read, “For years, the west has tried to deny this enemy exists out of a combination of political correctness and fear...Our European allies are now seeing what comes of a toxic mix of migrants who have been infiltrated by

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terrorists and isolated, radical Muslim neighborhoods.” The **statement also encouraged the American government to “empower law enforcement to patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods before they become radicalized.”**

- Later in March 2016, **Cruz published an opinion piece in the *New York Daily News*, in which he claimed that “our European allies are under siege from Islamic terrorism” and perpetuated the myth that there are Muslim communities in Europe that are considered “no-go zones” for law enforcement. He called for “vigorously guarding against the political correctness that has plagued Europe” and “empowering law enforcement to patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods before they follow the path of Molenbeek and become havens for radical Islamic terrorists.”**
- In June 2016, **Cruz invited Chris Gaubatz, a staff member at John Guandolo’s Understanding the Threat organization, to a US Senate committee hearing** entitled “Willful Blindness: Consequences of Agency Efforts To Deemphasize Radical Islam in Combating Terrorism.” At the hearing, Gaubatz, who *The Intercept* called an “anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist,” testified that the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had members that were “pro-Hamas jihadists.” Another witness at the hearing was Dr. Zuhdi Jasser, who *ThinkProgress* reported was on “Cruz’s side.” Jasser is known for “his conspiratorial views on Islam in the United States.”
- In April 2016 **on National Muslim Advocacy Day, Cruz declined to meet with 14 of his constituents who were Muslim**. After attempting to set up meetings by phone and email, the Texans were redirected to Cruz’s Middle East policy advisor, and then told Cruz was in meetings and unavailable. When they attempted to meet with Cruz in his Washington D.C. office, they were turned away.
- In **2017, Cruz reintroduced a bill (initially introduced in 2015) calling on the U.S. government to designate the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization**. A 2019 article in the *Washington Post* noted that “almost all academics and analysts, even those critical of the Brotherhood, agree that it is not a terrorist organization.” A 2017 article in *The Huffington Post* highlighted fears amongst American Muslim communities as they believe such a designation “would enable the U.S. government to target domestic Muslim groups that Cruz and others earnestly believe are part of a massive, covert conspiracy to destroy the U.S. from within.” J.M. Berger, a counterterrorism analyst at George Washington University’s Program on Extremism, stated that **Cruz’s initiative “is concerned with controlling American Muslims, not with any issue pertaining to the Muslim Brotherhood in any practical or realistic sense.”**
- In October 2017, **Cruz delivered remarks at Act for America’s Capitol Hill National Security Legislative Briefing, where he also accepted the National Security Eagle Award from the group**. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) identifies ACT as the largest grassroots anti-Muslim organizations in the U.S. Cruz attended the briefing again in 2018. In both speeches, he called on the government to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a foreign terrorist organization.
- In July 2018, Cruz publicly supported Dr. Shahid Shafi, the vice-chairman of the Tarrant County Republican Party. Dr. Shafi was the target of a campaign seeking to remove him from his post because of his Muslim identity. Cruz tweeted, “Discrimination against Dr. Shafi b/c he’s Muslim is wrong.”
- In 2013, **Cruz gave the keynote speech at Restoration Weekend, an annual event held by the David Horowitz Freedom Center, an anti-Muslim organization with connections to the Trump administration.**