

Silicon Valley Employees Refuse to Create a Muslim Registry

Donald Trump made many shocking promises during his campaign for the presidency, by far one of the most noteworthy and baleful being his threat to impose obligatory registration for Muslims in the United States. In the US, demographics create a very obvious relation between Muslim Americans and employment in the tech industry, due to the recent boom in immigration of Middle Easterners, especially to California. Because so many large tech companies are based or have offices in Silicon Valley, the concept of a Muslim registry has caused quite a stir in the area. So far, many large Silicon Valley companies have refused to be a part of Trump's plans, which has become synonymous with racist antagonistic views against Muslim Americans.

Trump has clashed with Silicon Valley on several issues including immigration, government surveillance and encryption, and most recently, the Muslim registry. During the month of December, a group of Silicon Valley technologists, engineers, designers, executives, and others began co-signing an online pledge refusing to participate in producing a collection of data that appear to discriminate against a specific group of people in the United States. The online pledge states moral reasons for feeling appalled by such an idea, while also drawing parallels between Trump's plan to create a Muslim registry and Adolf Hitler forcing the Jews to wear IBM punch cards as well as Trump's thoughts about deportation and Japanese-American internments and Armenian genocide.

About a year ago, Trump stated that he wanted a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the U.S. until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on." California is home to roughly 500,000 Muslims who, despite California being such a liberal state, fear that Trump may have already planted vicious ideas about the Muslim community in

the heads of many people throughout the country that will make life more difficult for the approximately 3.3 million Muslims living in the United States. Majid Mahmood, a Muslim living in California with his wife and two sons, stated his fear of Trump and the increase of hate crimes: “I’m really concerned that Trump has brought out something that was maybe hidden before, the hate is just out now, especially when you see an increased rate of hate crimes against Muslims.” Recent and possibly positive news for certain members of the Muslim community in the United States is Trump’s recent proposal to alter his original plan, which would force every Muslim coming into the country to register, and to instead only focus on those coming from countries linked to terrorism.

When asked whether they would assist Trump in creating a Muslim registry, many major tech companies in Silicon Valley refused. Employers and employees alike participated in an online pledge to never take a part in Trump’s considerably racist endeavour. The petition included an open letter to Trump reading, “We are choosing to stand in solidarity with Muslim Americans, immigrants, and all people whose lives and livelihoods are threatened by the incoming administration’s proposed data collection policies. We refuse to build a database of people based on their Constitutionally-protected religious beliefs. We refuse to facilitate mass deportations of people the government believes to be undesirable.”

Trump’s plans involving immigration and the Muslim registry are still, in many ways, unclear. Whether or not other large corporations around the country follow the lead of companies in Silicon Valley and refuse Trump’s request for assistance in creating the Muslim registry still remains a mystery as well. The idea of the registry, as well as many of Trump’s other plans

regarding the Muslim community, are considered by many to be quite controversial and will most likely continue to be debated about throughout Trump's first weeks as president.