



**Issue Brief:** Codifying discrimination and racial profiling of the Arab-American community via legislation intended to counter violent extremism

**Background:** The FBI, the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have inappropriately skewed the threat of violent extremism and domestic terrorism solely against Arabs and Muslims. The Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) paradigm is fatally flawed. The CVE pilot programs, the “Don’t Be a Puppet” web-based program aimed at middle and high schools students, government policies and practices, and now legislation, continue to target Arabs and Muslims under the false premise that they are inherently predisposed to committing acts of violence and terror.

- **Predicated on false premises:** The Countering Violent Extremism Act of 2015, H.R. 2899 (“CVE Act”) is predicated upon completely false premises and an inherently flawed CVE Program initiated by the White House earlier this year. The fact is that the vast majority of terrorists are not Arab, and the vast majority of Arabs are not terrorists.
- **Creates another expensive and unnecessary government bureaucracy:** The CVE Act would authorize the creation of a new Office for Countering Violent Extremism (“CVE Office”) at DHS and will allocate 40 million dollars of funding for its establishment over four years. This is legislation without oversight, a non-discrimination clause, nor any formal written guidance from DHS on the procedures, reporting, and overall implementation of this CVE office. Nevertheless, there is also pending legislation to authorize the appropriation of \$6 million in grants, for the undefined, unorganized, unstructured, unevaluated, and unaccountable CVE program, through the Countering Violent Extremism Grants Act.
- **Codifies racial profiling:** The Act attempts to codify unfair practices of racial and religious profiling under the CVE program that targets minority communities, particularly Arabs and Muslims, by claiming:
  - There are identifiable factors that can be linked to the presence of extremism in communities; and
  - That extremism must be combatted through a law enforcement mechanism. However, these so called “principles” are not supported by facts and leave open the implementation of CVE in a discriminatory manner.
- **Waste of resources:** The government should devote substantive resources to criminal investigations based on articulable suspicion and/or probable cause, rather than stereotypes, warrantless surveillance, and profiling. Resources should not target communities based upon race, national origin, religion, and/or immigrations status.

**The CVE Act of 2015 and funding under the CVE Grants Act would:**

- Make teachers, guidance counselors, religious leaders, and health workers an extension of law enforcement and force them to assess a person’s thoughts;
- Direct resources to continue to target and conduct surveillance against Muslim and Arab Americans as the suspect – “at risk” communities;
- Blurs the separation between “counter-radicalization and counterterrorism” and “community outreach and intelligence gathering”;
- Legitimize the over broad and over inclusive radicalization “at-risk” factors, which are unproven and not grounded in science, and open the door to discriminatory interpretations of whom is “at risk”;
- Fail to provide accountability, transparency, and sufficient oversight over the implementation of CVE under the newly created CVE Office.

**Ask:** **1)** Please prevent passage and VOTE NO to Countering Violent Extremism Act of 2015 (H.R. 2899) and Countering Violent Extremism Grants Act (H.R. 1022);

**2)** Enlist Congress to request a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the current CVE program.