

PROFILE: ACT! FOR AMERICA

Posted: March 25, 2011

ACT! for America is an organization dedicated to combating what it describes as "the threat of radical Islam" to the safety of Americans and to democracy. ACT! promotes the idea that Islam is a backward and seditious political ideology and that Muslim immigration to the U.S. must end.

The organization was launched in 2007 and is constructed around the persona of its founder and president, Brigitte Gabriel, who came to the U.S. in 1989. Gabriel's personal story of growing up Christian in Lebanon and as "a survivor of Islamic terror" is featured prominently in ACT!'s publications and is often cited in speeches by its leadership.

In her writings and public appearances, Gabriel often portrays Islam as a threat. In her book *They Must Be Stopped; Why We Must Defeat Radical Islam and How We Can Do It*, she wrote, "It is not yet politically correct to talk about a religious war. But this is exactly what we are facing: a religious war declared by devout Muslims. It's not radical Islam. It's what Islam is at its core."

Gabriel claims that 20 percent of all Muslims support a radical form of Islam that justifies suicide terrorism and works for the establishment of a global totalitarian Islamic state. She further claims that "tens of thousands of Islamic militants now reside in America operating in sleeper cells, attending our colleges and universities, even infiltrating our government."

Gabriel's views are in line with a growing field of groups that use community concerns about Islamic extremism to stoke fear toward the Muslim community at large. Among other groups that promote an extreme anti-Muslim agenda are [Stop Islamization of America \(SIOA\)](#) and the [Society of Americans for National Existence \(SANE\)](#).

ACT!'s advocacy is focused on combating what it perceives as "Islamofascism" or "cultural Jihad," and on countering what it describes as a culture of "festering political correctness." ACT! argues that there is a "rising tide of Islamofascism in our midst" and that it is "political correctness that is aiding its advance."

The group warns of the dire consequences of losing a "war against Islamofascism," which, according to ACT!, will result in a global Islamic state in which Americans will "live under Shari'a Law." It further claims that the process of Islamization of America is long under way. According to Gabriel, "America has been infiltrated on all levels by radicals who wish to harm America. They have infiltrated us at the CIA, at the FBI, at

the Pentagon, at the State Department. They are being radicalized in radical mosques in our cities and communities within the United States."

Though its leaders have denied being motivated by bigotry against Muslims, the group often argues against the distinction between radical and mainstream Islam. ACT! posted to its Web site an article titled "Stop Muslim immigration to the United States" which directs readers to an online petition calling for a moratorium on immigration from Muslim countries. The article, which is still available on ACT!'s Web site, explains: "WE HAVE NO way of determining which Muslims subscribe to pure Islam. The reason this matters is that pure Islam is seditious. We should stop all immigration into free countries by Muslims while we can."

ACT!'s national structure, which includes dozens of chapters across the country, enables it to effectively spread its message and work with various groups, including those affiliated with the Tea Party movement. The group claims to be "the largest national security grassroots organization" with "500 chapters and 155,000 members nationwide."

ACT! has sought to build on its grassroots support through its lobbying efforts and has been involved in legislations to block Shari'a, or Islamic law, at the state level. In Oklahoma, for example, it ran radio advertisements in support of ballot State Question 755, known as "Save Our State," which was approved by the voters in the November 2010 elections. It is currently promoting similar legislations in other states, including Florida, California and Pennsylvania.

Seeking to become even more influential in politics, ACT! has produced voter guides and congressional scorecards that focus on candidates' performances on issues "related to national security and the threat of radical Islam." It employs a full time lobbyist on Capitol Hill, Lisa Piraneo, who is officially titled ACT!'s Director of Government Relations.

Among its online initiatives is an internet based television show that is anchored by Gabriel and ACT!'s executive director Guy Rodgers, a veteran strategist who has worked with prominent Evangelical leaders. The first guest to appear on the show, which was aired on February 2011, was Congressman Peter King (R-NY), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee.

The Web sites of some local ACT! chapters publish materials that reflect the views of its leadership. For example, the Web site of ACT! chapter in Space Coast, Florida, has a section titled "Islam is Fire," which argues that "Islam is Satan's chief 'deception' playâ€¦It is not 'fanatical', 'radical', or 'extreme' Islam that we are fighting, but normal, orthodox, canonical, typical, accepted, traditional Islam, straight from the mouth of Muhammad."

ACT! was formed in 2007 as an outgrowth of a American Congress for Truth, which was established by Gabriel in 2002 as a vehicle to promote her views about Islam and security, as well as her books and public appearances. American Congress for Truth,

later renamed as Act! for America Education, continues to operate as a separate non-profit tax-exempt organization. But, as Guy Rodgers explains, "both organizations fulfill functions essential to the vision and long-term objective, which is the rolling back of the threat of radical Islam."

In recent years, Gabriel has enjoyed a growing popularity, making hundreds of appearances at political gatherings, in churches and synagogues. She has also met with politicians and world leaders and has lectured to mainstream non-sectarian audiences.