

August 27, 2019

# Rep. Steve King - Town Hall

At a town hall event on August 27<sup>th</sup>, Rep. Steve King (R – Iowa), specifically referred to China's crackdown on the ethnic Uighur minority and other Islamic groups. But then he said,

*“They want them to put on Chinese clothing and eat Chinese diet, which includes trying to force the Muslims to eat pork,” King said. “That’s actually the only part of that that I agree with, everybody ought to eat pork. If you have a shortage of bacon, you can’t be happy.”*

Taken in context, it appears that Rep. King may have thought he was bringing attention to the issue, while also attempting to make an inside joke to his constituents. Iowa is the top pork-producing state in the U.S. However, this is also not the first time King has scorned Islam’s dietary restrictions. In a 2018 Breitbart interview when discussing his district’s meatpacking plants, he objected to the plants employing Somali Muslims, saying,

*“I don’t want people doing my pork that won’t eat it, let alone hope I go to hell for eating pork chops.”*

While King is not the only American lawmaker who has made **Problematic Statements**, this is also not the first time that King’s statements have sparked controversy. He has been condemned by his Democratic and Republican colleagues alike for his repeated use of Islamophobia, anti-Semitic, and white supremacist rhetoric.

And that rhetoric is dangerous. At Tanenbaum, we understand the devastating effects rhetoric such as this can cause, often with devastating and deadly consequences.

Tanenbaum unequivocally condemns Islamophobia and all forms of religious bigotry. We *all* have a responsibility to stand against hate and xenophobia, and hold not just our elected representatives—but ourselves and everyone around us—to higher standards.

You can be part of the solution. Together we can create a groundswell of credible, responsible voices against religious hate. One way is to use our *Combating Extremism* resources, Explaining Extremism and Addressing Islamophobia and Five Ways to Counter Extremism on Social Media for practical approaches to opposing and discussing extremism.

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