Confronting Death Threats and Hate: A Congressional Candidate's Stand Against Harassment

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> A congressional candidate in Washington's 9th district shares her experience of receiving repeated death threats and harassment while running for office, and calls on local leadership to address the abuse targeting her and other women, particularly women of color and immigrants.

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Melissa Chowdhury, a congressional candidate, describes a pattern of escalating harassment including voicemail death threats, rape threats, and property destruction that began during her 2020 campaign and continues into her current run for Congress. She details her deep American roots—tracing her family back to the Mayflower on her mother's side, her grandfather's survival of a Nazi concentration camp, her father's career as a retired U.S. naval commander and humanitarian doctor, and her husband's service as a decorated disabled military veteran. Despite reporting incidents to Seattle police without action, she emphasizes that her family's foundation has always been service, sacrifice, and love for America. She addresses her decision to wear a headscarf as a personal choice rooted in dignity, modesty, and the freedom that America represents, comparing it to religious head coverings worn throughout history. She directly challenges Mayor Katie Wilson about accountability, arguing that if abusers have her phone number, local leadership must take responsibility. Her campaign centers on ensuring every American has dignity, safety, and opportunity—and building a country where no one is threatened for their appearance or identity.

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- The candidate receives regular death threats and harassment, including specific threats of hanging and rape, targeting her identity as a Muslim woman and American political candidate.
- She reports a pattern of abuse spanning at least two years across multiple campaigns, with minimal response from local law enforcement despite documented incidents.

Her family has a documented history of American service and sacrifice: her grandfather survived a Nazi concentration camp, her father is a retired naval commander and humanitarian doctor with deployments to Iraq, Bosnia, and Afghanistan, and her husband is a decorated disabled military veteran.

She defends her choice to wear a headscarf as an expression of personal dignity, modesty, and the freedom she believes America represents, while drawing parallels to religious head coverings worn across cultures and history.

She calls for direct accountability from local leadership, specifically Mayor Katie Wilson, to address and act against racist harassment occurring in the city.

She frames her congressional campaign around protecting dignity, safety, and opportunity for all Americans, including those vulnerable to harassment based on identity, gender, or immigration status.

She emphasizes that her experience of targeted harassment is not unique and urges consideration of how other women, women of color, and immigrant women face similar or worse treatment.

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Receiving Repeated Death Threats

I am receiving voicemail death threats on a regular basis. One recent message said, "We are going to hang you for treason. You anti-American Muslim piece of shit." These calls come to me at midnight repeatedly. This is not new. Two years ago, when I ran for office in 2020, the same pattern emerged: death threats, rape threats, violence, property destruction outside my home, and hate notes left under my car's windshield wiper. When I reported these incidents to Seattle police, they did nothing.

American Heritage and Family Service

I am an American. I'm as American as they come. I was born here on my mother's side, and I can trace my roots back to the American Revolution and the Mayflower. My grandfather on my father's side survived over two years in a Nazi concentration camp and later died from his wounds here in America. My father is a retired U.S. naval commander and an international humanitarian doctor. He has had deployments to Iraq, Bosnia, and Afghanistan among many others, and he has spent his career saving lives and responding to disasters around the world. My husband is an honorable, decorated, disabled American military veteran in a wheelchair due to injuries he sustained on active duty. Service, sacrifice, and love for America has been the foundation of my family's life work since childhood.

A Life Shaped by American Values

I grew up going to Methodist Church on Sundays, singing the national anthem on the Fourth of July with tears in my eyes, and flipping channels between Star Trek and the Super Bowl. This is the America I know. If this is what is happening to me, imagine what is happening to other women, to women of color, and to immigrant women who face similar or worse harassment.

Running for Congress

I have dedicated my life to the best of what America stands for: equality, freedom, and justice for all. I am running for Congress to ensure that every American has dignity, safety, and opportunity—the freedom to grow up, raise a family, develop a career or a business, and grow old with sustenance, stability, and respect. I am fighting for good things for everyone in this country, including the person who just threatened to hang me in public for covering my hair. As you can see from the thousands of comments on my social media, he is not alone.

Accountability from Local Leadership

Mayor Katie Wilson, if racist abusers who want to hang me have my phone number, I am sure you do too. This is happening in your city. What are you going to do about it?

On Wearing a Headscarf

About my headscarf: Mary, the blessed Mother of Jesus, our Prince of Peace, wore one. So have women across cultures throughout history. It is a sign of dignity, modesty, and self-respect. It tells anyone around me that I value myself beyond how you might objectify my body—that my worth is not reduced to my skin or the objectification of my body. But really, my decision to wear it boils down to one thing that I have loved about America since I was three years old. It is a free country, right? If wearing it brings solidarity to those oppressed women in America—yes, oppressed women in America—then maybe that is good solidarity as well.

A Vision for America

My name is Melissa Chowdhury. I am running for Congress in Washington's ninth district because I believe that it is a free country and that no one has the right to hang or kill or threaten to hang or kill another person for wearing a scarf. I am here to build a country where everyone belongs.

#Political harassment and death threats #Women in politics #Religious discrimination #Congressional campaign #Hate speech and abuse #Law enforcement accountability #Identity and freedom of expression

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