

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MWA JOINS COALITION URGING APPOINTMENTS TO POST 9/11
PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD**

**Mechanism Designed to Protect American's from Invasive Privacy and Civil Liberties
Intrusions Stagnated by Empty Board Seats**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (MWA) March 2, 2010 – In follow-up to an effort initiated by the Center for Democracy & Technology in November 2009, resurrected by the Defending Dissent Foundation in a [letter](#) addressed to President Barack Obama dated March 1, 2010, Muslimah Writers Alliance (MWA) joins the American Civil Liberties Union, Arab American Institute, Muslim Advocates and a host of coalition partners, in urging President Barack Obama to end the protracted delay in nominating appointees to the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB).



The PCLOB, created by Congress in 2004 based on 9/11 Commission recommendations, serves to ensure that concerns with respect to privacy and civil liberties are appropriately considered in the implementation of all laws, regulations and executive branch policies related to protecting the nation against acts of terrorism.

In an effort to allow the PCLOB to better serve the nation's citizens, Congress restructured the Board in 2007 providing it with independence and subpoena powers; a move yet to realize any of its full potential as the Board languishes due to a lack of nominations to fill empty seats. Thus, the revamped Board does not yet exist.

"The coalition's earlier [request](#) of November 2009 to President Obama, subsequent recommendations outlined in our March 1, 2010 [letter](#), and comments made by National Intelligence Director, Admiral Dennis Blair to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on January 20, 2010, and testimony offered to the same committee on January 26, 2010 by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the 9/11 Commission, Governor Thomas Keane and Congressman Lee Hamilton, seem to have fallen on deaf ears, as we enter yet another month of stagnation in the process of insuring that the privacy and civil liberties of our nation's citizens are fully protected," stated MWA Director, [Aishah Schwartz](#).

[Schwartz](#) added, "The PCLOB is one of the few safeguards U.S. citizens have shielding them against improper intrusions into privacy and civil liberties. With the foiled 2009 "Christmas Day" bombing, the President and Congress have called for sweeping policy and legal changes – including the expansion of watch lists and more intrusive searches at airports – adding to the urgency and absolute necessity of filling the PCLOB's empty seats."

In addition to MWA, organizations supporting this initiative include: American Association of Law Libraries, American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, American Library Association, Association of Research Libraries, Bill of Rights Defense Committee, Center for Democracy & Technology, Center for National Security Studies, Council on American-Islamic Relations, The Constitution Project, Defending Dissent Foundation, DownsizeDC.org, Inc., Electronic Frontier Foundation, Electronic Privacy Information Center, Federation of American Scientists, Government Accountability Project, Liberty Coalition, Muslim Public Affairs Council, OMB

Watch, Privacy Lives, Rutherford Institute, and the U.S. Bill of Rights Foundation.

Call the White House switchboard today at (202) 456-1414, send a fax (202) 456-2461, or make your voice heard through the online contact form found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>, and urge President Obama to bring an end to the ongoing delay in appointing members to the PCLOB; your privacy and civil liberties are at stake.

Established in 2006, MWA is an internationally-based collaboration of Muslim women writers working together to counter negative and inaccurate perceptions regarding members of the Muslim community and the Islamic faith.

Muslimah Writers Alliance

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RELATED:

Letter to President Obama Urging Nominations to the PCLOB (March 1, 2010)

http://muslimahwritersalliance.com/projects/mwa_to_obama_validate_pclob.pdf

TINY URL <http://tinyurl.com/pclob>

Letter to President Obama Urging Nominations to the PCLOB (Nov. 11, 2009)

http://www.cdt.org/righttoknow/20091110_pclob_ltr.pdf

The Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board: In Need of Attention

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ginny-sloan/the-privacy-and-civil-lib_b_322527.html