

ATTACHMENT

For Item

26

TUESDAY
April 30, 2024

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION RECEIVED BY THE
CLERK OF THE BOARD

DISTRIBUTED 04/29/2024.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



المركز الإسلامي في سان دييغو
ISLAMIC CENTER OF SAN DIEGO

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

On behalf of the Islamic Center of San Diego, I am writing to express my strong support for the policy you are bringing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on April 30th, regarding the self-identification of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) residents in our county's data collection processes.

Located in the heart of Clairemont with a satellite location in El Cajon, the Islamic Center of San Diego is the largest mosque in San Diego County. We serve thousands of San Diego residents of MENA heritage through regular activities including the five daily prayers, Friday prayer and sermon, and a variety of educational events. Our mission is to serve the religious needs of the San Diego Muslim population and work with the larger community to serve the less fortunate, to educate, and to better our nation.

The MENA community is a vibrant part of our county's tapestry, contributing to our economy, culture, and social fabric. Yet, without proper recognition in data collection, their specific needs and contributions may remain invisible, leading to a lack of adequate services and support.

The decision by the White House to include a MENA category in the 2030 Census is a step in the right direction, and it is crucial that our county aligns with this progress. By offering a MENA self-identification option on county forms, we are not only upholding the values of inclusivity and respect but also ensuring that MENA residents have a voice in our community.

Furthermore, this policy supports the pending California State Legislature Assembly Bill 2763, which seeks to add a MENA category to demographic forms used in our state. By adopting a position of support for this bill, San Diego County can lead by example and advocate for the recognition of the MENA community at a broader level.

Your leadership on this issue demonstrates a commitment to an equitable and representative approach to governance that acknowledges the diversity of our county. I commend this initiative and urge the Board of Supervisors to approve this policy, reinforcing our community's dedication to inclusivity and respect for all residents.

Sincerely,

Taha Hassane
Imam and Director
Islamic Center of San Diego



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

I am writing to express my strong support for the policy you are bringing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on April 30th, regarding the self-identification of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) residents in our county's data collection processes.

The MENA community is a vibrant part of our county's tapestry, contributing to our economy, culture, and social fabric. Yet, without proper recognition in data collection, their specific needs and contributions may remain invisible, leading to a lack of adequate services and support.

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Your leadership on this issue demonstrates a commitment to an equitable and representative approach to governance that acknowledges the diversity of our county. I commend this initiative and urge the Board of Supervisors to approve this policy, reinforcing our community's dedication to inclusivity and respect for all residents.

Sincerely,

Jolyana Jirjees.
Executive Director
Chaldean Community Council

UC San Diego

**HERBERT WERTHEIM
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND
HUMAN LONGEVITY SCIENCE**

Tala Al-Rousan, MD, MPH
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health
Director, Center for Displacement and Health Research
Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health and Human
Longevity
talrousan@health.ucsd.edu



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

I am a Faculty Member at the University of California, San Diego, and Founding Director of the Displacement and Health Research Center at the Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health. I am writing to express my strong support for the policy you are bringing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on April 30th regarding the self-identification of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) residents in our county's data collection processes.

The MENA community is a vibrant part of our county's tapestry, contributing to our economy, culture, and social fabric. Yet, without proper recognition in data collection, their specific needs and contributions may remain invisible, leading to inadequate services and support.

The White House's decision to include a MENA category in the 2030 Census is a step in the right direction, and it is crucial that our county aligns with this progress. By offering a MENA self-identification option on county forms, we are upholding the values of inclusivity and respect and ensuring that MENA residents have a voice in our community.

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Your leadership on this issue demonstrates a commitment to an equitable and representative approach to governance that acknowledges our county's diversity. I commend this initiative and urge the Board of Supervisors to approve this policy, reinforcing our community's dedication to inclusivity and respect for all residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Tala", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Tala Al-Rousan
Assistant Professor
Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health and Human Longevity
University of California San Diego
Bernard Lown Fellow
Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health

April 26, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

I am writing to express my strong support for the policy you are bringing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on April 30th, regarding the self-identification of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) residents in our county's data collection processes.

The MENA community is a vibrant part of our county's tapestry, contributing to our economy, culture, and social fabric. Yet, without proper recognition in data collection, their specific needs and contributions may remain invisible, leading to a lack of adequate services and support.

The decision by the White House to include a MENA category in the 2030 Census is a step in the right direction, and it is crucial that our county aligns with this progress. By offering a MENA self-identification option on county forms, we are not only upholding the values of inclusivity and respect but also ensuring that MENA residents have a voice in our community.

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Your leadership on this issue demonstrates a commitment to an equitable and representative approach to governance that acknowledges the diversity of our county. I commend this initiative and urge the Board of Supervisors to approve this policy, reinforcing our community's dedication to inclusivity and respect for all residents.

Sincerely,

Shakeels

Shakeel Syed
Executive Director
South Asian Network



NAAMA
Education, Leadership, Philanthropy

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

I am writing to express my strong support for the policy you are bringing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on April 30th, regarding the self-identification of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) residents in our county's data collection processes. The MENA community is a vibrant part of our county's tapestry, contributing to our economy, culture, and social fabric. Yet, without proper recognition in data collection, their specific needs and contributions may remain invisible, leading to a lack of adequate services and support.

The decision by the White House to include a MENA category in the 2030 Census is a step in the right direction, and it is crucial that our county aligns with this progress. By offering a MENA self-identification option on county forms, we are not only upholding the values of inclusivity and respect but also ensuring that MENA residents have a voice in our community.

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Your leadership on this issue demonstrates a commitment to an equitable and representative approach to governance that acknowledges the diversity of our county. I commend this initiative and urge the Board of Supervisors to approve this policy, reinforcing our community's dedication to inclusivity and respect for all residents.

Sincerely

Hassan Kafri MD
NAAMA-San Diego Chapter President



Partnership for the
Advancement of
New Americans

Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans — PANA

5348 University Avenue, Suite 110, San Diego, CA 92105

www.panasd.org



Tel: (619) 363-6939

April 29, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Anderson,

As we celebrate Arab American Heritage Month, I am reaching out to express strong support for your recommendations impacting San Diego's Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) communities. We at the Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA) have seen firsthand how communities that are invisible in the data are missed in vital services and excluded from policymaking. When data does not count our communities, we find it difficult as advocates to push for inclusive programs to serve diverse needs.

We welcomed the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's March 28 announcement that the 2030 Census will include a MENA category for the first time. When given the chance in the 2020 Census to write in a country of origin, [3.5 million](#) people previously marked as "white" reported their MENA roots. The addition of a MENA category in the 2030 Census will help policymakers better understand and serve millions of people.

But change at the federal level will take time. It will be years before 2030 Census data is gathered and can begin to shape policy. State and local data collection would go a long way in serving our communities' immediate needs, as well as help community-based-organizations like PANA organize our communities for effective census implementation in 2030.

In that vein, we welcome your recommendation that San Diego County support A.B. 2763, which would mandate statewide data collection of MENA communities. PANA is part of the #CountMENAinCA coalition supporting the bill. If it passes, California will join [Illinois](#), which passed a similar bill last year. Other statewide MENA bills are pending in [Michigan](#) and [New York](#).

Local data collection would go even further, and we also welcome your recommendation for local data collection of MENA communities by San Diego County to improve program administration. This initiative would help our local government tailor vital programs and services to specific populations, and help implement San Diego County's Language Access Policy (A-139).

Your leadership for the MENA community sets an example for the rest of the state. By counting our communities locally and statewide, your policy recommendations will make our communities count! Thank you for your vision and dedication, and we stand by you in support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mytili Bala". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mytili Bala
Democracy Counsel
Partnership for the Advancement of New
Americans - PANA



Olive Community Services, Inc.
328 E. Commonwealth Ave
Fullerton, CA 92832
(714) 643-6343
Tax ID #81-2938405

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

I am writing to express my strong support for the policy you are bringing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on April 30th, regarding the self-identification of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) residents in our county's data collection processes.

The MENA community is a vibrant part of our county's tapestry, contributing to our economy, culture, and social fabric. Yet, without proper recognition in data collection, their specific needs and contributions may remain invisible, leading to a lack of adequate services and support.

The decision by the White House to include a MENA category in the 2030 Census is a step in the right direction, and it is crucial that our county aligns with this progress. By offering a MENA self-identification option on county forms, we are not only upholding the values of inclusivity and respect but also ensuring that MENA residents have a voice in our community.

Furthermore, this policy supports the pending California State Legislature Assembly Bill 2763, which seeks to add a MENA category to demographic forms used in our state. By adopting a position of support for this bill, San Diego County can lead by example and advocate for the recognition of the MENA community at a broader level.

Your leadership on this issue demonstrates a commitment to an equitable and representative approach to governance that acknowledges the diversity of our county. I commend this initiative and urge the Board of Supervisors to approve this policy, reinforcing our community's dedication to inclusivity and respect for all residents.

Sincerely,

Muhammad Tariq Mughal
CFO
Olive Community Services, Inc.

LIVE

LEARN

THRIVE



Majdal: Arab Community Center of San Diego
329 E. Main St El Cajon, CA 92020
majdalcenter.org • (619) 800 – 1687

April 29, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

On behalf of Majdal, the Arab Community Center of San Diego, I am writing to express my strong support for the policy you are bringing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on April 30th, regarding the self-identification of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) residents in our county's data collection processes.

At the Majdal Center, we work with key segments of the MENA community, particularly new refugees and immigrants. In El Cajon and across the County, the MENA community has demonstrated substantial contributions to San Diego's economic, cultural, and social fabric. Yet, without proper recognition in data collection, our community's specific needs and contributions may remain invisible, leading to a lack of adequate services and support.

We have long advocated for the adoption of the MENA census category with the understanding that it will increase resources for our communities. We welcome the White House's decision to include a MENA category in the 2030 Census as a step in the right direction. It is crucial that our county aligns with this progress. By offering a MENA self-identification option on county forms, we are not only upholding the values of inclusivity and respect but also ensuring that MENA residents have a voice in our community.

Furthermore, this policy supports the pending California State Legislature Assembly Bill 2763, which seeks to add a MENA category to demographic forms used in our state. By adopting a position of support for this bill, San Diego County can lead by example and advocate for the recognition of the MENA community at a broader level.

I commend this initiative and urge the Board of Supervisors to approve this policy, reinforcing our community's dedication to inclusivity and representation for all residents.

Sincerely,

Ramah Awad
Executive Director
Majdal: Arab Community Center of San Diego
ramah@majdalcenter.org
(408) 420-1259

KARAMA Arab and Islamic World Information Project



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

I am writing on behalf of KARAMA to express our support for the policy you are bringing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on April 30th, regarding the self-identification of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) residents in our county's data collection processes.

The MENA community is a vibrant part of our county's tapestry, contributing to our economy, culture, and social fabric. Yet, it has been invisible in data collection mechanisms of the County. Without proper recognition in data collection, their specific needs and contributions may remain invisible, leading to a lack of adequate services and support. Moreover, inadequate data collection leads to under-reporting of the various ways in which the community is victimized and even attacked by those motivated by anti-Arab and anti-Muslim animus.

The decision by the White House to include a MENA category in the 2030 Census is a step in the right direction, and it is crucial that our county aligns with this progress. By offering a MENA self-identification option on county forms, we are not only upholding the values of inclusivity and respect but also ensuring that MENA residents have a voice in our community. Still, it is only a step. More needs to be done, including providing an objective definition of "Middle Eastern" to ensure that respondents know whether it applies to them.

Furthermore, this policy supports the pending California State Legislature Assembly Bill 2763, which seeks to add a MENA category to demographic forms used in our state. By adopting a position of support for this bill, San Diego County can lead by example and advocate for the recognition of the MENA community at a broader level.

Your leadership on this issue demonstrates a commitment to an equitable and representative approach to governance that acknowledges the diversity of our county. I commend this initiative and urge the Board of Supervisors to approve this policy, reinforcing our community's dedication to inclusivity and respect for all residents.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Larry Christian in black ink.

Larry Christian
President
KARAMA

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

I am writing to express my strong support for the policy you are bringing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on April 30th, regarding the self-identification of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) residents in our county's data collection processes. Palestinian American Citizens Group is a statewide organization representing Palestinian American that are committed to civic duty. We have thousands of members in the San Diego area. We are looking forward to being recognized through the MENA inclusion so that our voices and contribution can be accounted for.

The MENA community is a vibrant part of our county's tapestry, contributing to our economy, culture, and social fabric. Yet, without proper recognition in data collection, their specific needs and contributions may remain invisible, leading to a lack of adequate services and support.

The decision by the White House to include a MENA category in the 2030 Census is a step in the right direction, and it is crucial that our county aligns with this progress. By offering a MENA self-identification option on county forms, we are not only upholding the values of inclusivity and respect but also ensuring that MENA residents have a voice in our community.

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Your leadership on this issue demonstrates a commitment to an equitable and representative approach to governance that acknowledges the diversity of our county. I commend this initiative and urge the Board of Supervisors to approve this policy, reinforcing our community's dedication to inclusivity and respect for all residents.

Sincerely,

Nizar Milbes
Steering Committee Lead
Palestinian American Citizens Group



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
San Diego County
1600 Pacific Coast Highway #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

I am writing to express my strong support for the policy you are bringing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on April 30th, regarding the self-identification of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) residents in our county's data collection processes.

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Sincerely,

Amin Nash
Policy and Research Coordinator, Chair of the CA MENA Civil Rights Coalition
The Arab American Civic Council and the CA MENA Civil Rights Coalition



List of organizations in the coalition:

Arab American Civic Council
Armenian-American Action Network
Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region (ANCA-WR)
National Iranian American Council (NIAC) Action
Council on American-Islamic Relations, California (CAIR-CA)
American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
Somali Family Service of San Diego
Arab Cultural and Community Center in San Francisco Bay Area
Access California Services
MENAarts Newsletter
National Network of Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
Majdal Center, San Diego
Yemeni Alliance Committee
Iranian American Bar Association
The Gay and Lesbian Armenian Society (GALAS)
The Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA)
Libyan American Alliance
Tunisian United Network
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
National Arab American Medical Association
MENA Arts Advocacy Coalition