

Rashida Tlaib joins Congressional Freethought Caucus

by [Aysha Khan](#) in the [September 23, 2020](#) issue



(Photo from US House of Representatives)

Rep. Rashida Tlaib, one of the first Muslim women in Congress, has joined the Congressional Freethought Caucus.

Launched in 2018, the caucus seeks to promote secular government, separation of church and state, freedom of conscience, and policy “based on reason, science, and moral values,” as well as to oppose discrimination against nonreligious people.

Members do not need to identify as nonreligious.

“Supporting religious freedom, church/state separation, and evidence-based public policy aren’t simply constitutional,” said atheist advocate and author Hemant Mehta, who first reported the news on his blog Friendly Atheist. “Those principles represent the best path forward for the country. Rep. Tlaib also understands that those values are perfectly aligned with her faith.”

The Congressional Freethought Caucus was organized by Rep. Jared Huffman, who identifies as humanist and is Congress’s only openly nontheistic member, along with Reps. Jamie Raskin, Jerry McNerney, and Dan Kildee.

Mehta said he hoped Tlaib’s participation spurs other members of Congress to also join the caucus.

“As an atheist, I know it’s not always easy for members of Congress to openly express support for nonreligious people,” Mehta said. “I genuinely appreciate her support of secular Americans—and secular values—across the country.”

Tlaib’s office did not respond to a request for comment. —Religion News Service