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## **Political Islamophobia is a shameful, losing strategy.**

National racial justice organisation, Democracy in Colour, has slammed the blatant Islamophobic push stemming from political leaders following the events related to Senator Fatima Payman leaving the Australian Labor Party yesterday. Democracy in Colour has condemned comments made by Opposition Leader Peter Dutton and the broader baseless fearmongering taking place due to Senator Payman's faith.

Democracy in Colour Campaigner, Jarrod Tan says:

“Over the last 24 hours, we have seen a shameful display of blatant Islamophobia. The disparity between the negative focus on Senator Payman's religion and that of all other faiths in federal parliament is an obvious smear. People should know better than to fuel this kind of dangerous rhetoric.

“The double standard at play here is obvious and discriminatory. Almost every parliament in Australia starts their sitting days with a prayer and many politicians take an oath to God when being sworn in. Even our most recent Prime Minister Scott Morrison has been very clear about how his religious beliefs have influenced his decision-making. Suggesting that this influence is a liability based on the specific faith of the individual is a religiously motivated attack that cannot be tolerated.

“The focus on Senator Payman meeting with a Muslim-based electoral education group also reeks of Islamophobia. Politicians are renowned for meeting with lobbyists from almost all industries, community leaders and religious groups. Rarely are these meetings in the spotlight like we have seen with Senator Payman. Again, this focus is clearly due to her faith and designed to stir up Islamophobia in the voting public”

“Politicians from all sides know that there is an electoral benefit to engaging with a diverse cross-section of the community in their electorates. Criticism the likes of which we have seen directed at Senator Payman over the last 24 hours is almost unheard of.

“Islamophobia is being used to score political points at the expense of many in our communities. This kind of discriminatory electioneering is completely out of step with the values of safety and community that unite all of us across this country and we are calling for politicians to stop talking down to their constituents for their electoral gain.

“These people who are in a position to create real change in this country should get on with the job at hand rather than continually targeting specific groups in our society. Increasingly, we are hearing that voters are sick of politicians who target the community to escape accountability or score political points. We are calling for all politicians to engage in meaningful discussion around the many genuine drivers of the issues we are all facing today.” he said.

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*Democracy in Colour is a national racial and economic justice movement of over 16,000 members that advocates for people of colour and multicultural communities across the country. Read more at [democracyincolour.org](http://democracyincolour.org)*