

MARIA CANTWELL

WASHINGTON



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

May 13, 2021

Dear friends of the Muslim American community,

Salaam Alaikum, and Eid Mubarak to all Washingtonians and Muslim Americans who are celebrating another end to the holy month of Ramadan with their families, friends, and communities. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Islamic Relief USA for continuing to partner with organizations to provide humanitarian relief to our most distraught communities during such a difficult time for all of us.

Last year when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Ramadan looked a lot different than it ever has due to CDC guidelines on public gatherings and social distancing. I express my deepest sympathies to the families in our Muslim American communities who had empty seats at their tables during suhoor and iftar due to losing loved ones. Even in the face of these hardships and uncertainty, Muslim Americans have shown resilience by continuing to exude the spirit of Ramadan by giving thanks for the good in life, donating to community celebrations, and uplifting our neighbors in need.

I am especially grateful to Islamic Relief USA for its work in relieving our most vulnerable and hardest hit communities from COVID-19. Islamic Relief USA has over 3,200 active supporters in Washington state who donated more than \$3.2 million to its humanitarian and COVID-19 response programs in 2020, partnering with organizations in my state such as Muslim Housing Services in Seattle, The Islamic Center of Eastside in Bellevue, Muslim Association of Puget Sound in Redmond, Partner in Employment in SeaTac, and Abu-Bakr Islamic Center of Washington in Tukwila. Nationwide, Islamic Relief USA committed roughly \$10.75 million in 2020 to enhance the capacity of local organizations responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While things look more promising this Eid thanks to a rise in vaccinations, I strongly encourage all of our Muslim Americans celebrating Eid festivities this Ramadan to do so in accordance with the CDC's guidelines on social gatherings. I understand this is a dramatic change to how Eid is traditionally celebrated, but if we all continue to do our part to fight against COVID-19 the sooner we can get back to gathering in person to celebrate future Eid festivities.

Shukran again to Islamic Relief USA for all of your impactful work and years of dedicated service. Eid Mubarak to all who are celebrating, and inshallah I wish you all a blessed and happy end to Ramadan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Cantwell".

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator