

Reps. McMillin, Agema, Calley, Meltzer and Paul Scott offered the following resolution:
House Resolution No. 313.

A resolution to express strong disappointment over the recent assault on first amendment freedom of speech rights with the arrest of four individuals at the Arab Festival in Dearborn and to urge the Michigan Attorney General to investigate the matter.

Whereas, On June 18, 2010, an incident took place at the Arab Festival in Dearborn that has drawn attention as an undeserved assault on first amendment rights. Four people, Negeen Mayel, Dr. Nabeel Qureshi, Paul Rezkalla, and David Wood, were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, even though video evidence indicates that these four individuals were doing little more than talking with people who had initiated conversations with them; and

Whereas, The four people put into handcuffs by Dearborn police were at the festival to make themselves available to festival attendees in the hopes of engaging them in discussions about religion in response to questions from people attending or near the festival. The four individuals, who were exercising their rights to free speech, hoped to talk about their Christian faith with people who asked or to distribute copies of one of the gospels. By all accounts, including video recording on the scene before the recording equipment was confiscated by police, the interactions were not precipitated by the four who were arrested. Anyone seeing the recorded interactions would be hard pressed to find any evidence of disorderly conduct initiated by the persons taken into custody; and

Whereas, The Michigan Constitution reaffirms the rights secured in our federal constitution. Article 1, Section 5 of the Michigan Constitution provides: "Every person may freely speak, write, express and publish his views on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of such right; and no law shall be enacted to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech or of the press"; and

Whereas, The sanctity of our first amendment rights to free speech is not conditioned by which religion or which point of view a person advocates. The rights set forth in our fundamental law cannot be pushed aside for political correctness or to accommodate certain circumstances or locales; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we express strong disappointment over the recent assault of first amendment rights with the arrest of Negeen Mayel, Dr. Nabeel Qureshi, Paul Rezkalla, and David Wood at the Arab Festival in Dearborn; and be it further

Resolved, That we also urge the Michigan Attorney General to investigate the assault on these citizens' rights under Article 1, Section 5 of the Michigan Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Dearborn Police Department, the Thomas More Law Center, and the Office of the Michigan Attorney General.