



# Maricopa County Attorney

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **ACLU Distorts the Truth about Training Seminar on Islamic Extremism**

PHOENIX – The American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona is spreading misinformation about an upcoming law enforcement training seminar on Islamic extremism sponsored by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office. A letter distributed to media outlets authored by ACLU Legal Director Dan Pochoda contains numerous false statements and inaccuracies about the nature and content of the training, titled "Understanding the Threat." In a detailed [response](#) to the ACLU letter, County Attorney Bill Montgomery exposes these inaccurate claims and clarifies what the training is and what it is not.

"This training is consistent with education we have provided to our prosecutors and law enforcement partners about the threat posed by a wide variety of ideologies, from White Supremacists to the Sovereign Citizens' Movement," Montgomery said. "It is critical to effective policing for law enforcement to be aware of the role extremist ideology can play in order to distinguish individuals who pose a threat from those who happen to share a common racial, ethnic, religious or ideological background," he added.

In his written response, Montgomery challenges each of the ACLU's claims about the training session and its presenters, highlighting the organization's use of inaccurate citations, quotations taken out of context, and information that is completely irrelevant to content that will be covered in the training. "The mischaracterizations and false information contained in the ACLU's letter do more to inflame passions than anything this training will ever do," he said.

Montgomery also rejects the ACLU's assertion that the training is anti-Islam or disparaging of local Muslims, noting that hundreds of Valley law enforcement officers have been trained by one of the presenters, John Guandolo, with no resulting claims of biased policing against Muslims in Maricopa County. He also points out that members of the County Attorney's Office attended a session of "Understanding the Threat" earlier this year and verified that the content would meet training objectives and was appropriate. Montgomery underscores that training on the ideology used by extremist organizations, even if sourced out of Islam and the Quran, cannot fairly be said to be anti-Islam or anti-Muslim.

Montgomery concludes his response by stating, “This training will go forward to ensure law enforcement and prosecutors are equipped to recognize evidence of extremist threats and avoid unsupported generalizations of Muslims that would negatively impact the positive relationship law enforcement shares with the local Muslim community.”

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