



In Interview, Sitting Senator Lindsey Graham Muses About How "Terrible" It Would Be To Be Iranian

Dear Members and Friends,

On October 16, 2018, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) publicly mused about how "terrible" it would be to of Iranian heritage. To be clear, his disgust was not aimed at the Iranian *leaders* or the Iranian *regime*...his disdain was focused on *being Iranian*.

The comment occurred during an interview with Fox & Friends. In the context of discussing genetic testing, and after announcing his intention to take his own genetic test, Senator Graham mused: "I'll probably be Iranian. That'd be, like, terrible." The blatantly racist remark prompted even Fox host Brian Kilmeade to try to correct that "they are great people, just bad leaders." You can see his comments [here](#).

Setting aside the offensive nature of the bias reflected in the senator's statement, what is most disgraceful about it was the casual nature by which a sitting senator, presumably with Iranian American constituents, directed bigotry at a whole ethnic community without a second thought. The Iranian American Bar Association calls on Senator Graham to apologize for, and withdraw, his highly offensive remark.

In the wake of policies like the Travel Ban, and denigration of Muslims and Middle Easterners, the comment should be an additional wake-up call for our community. Many of those who purport to represent us, including those at the highest levels of government, seem to carry express or implied bias towards those of Iranian heritage. The policies they implement, reflect that bias.

While the comment has ignited condemnation and news articles (see for example [here](#) or [here](#)), the outrage has not been proportionate to the flagrant racism reflected by a U.S. senator. That is why we must make our voices heard. Here are three simple things you can do:

1. Call or email Senator Graham's office and let him know that his casual racist comment is offensive and unacceptable, and demand an apology. [Click here](#) to send an email, or call 202-224-5972;

2. In a few weeks, get out and vote for representatives who respect those of Iranian heritage, and the issues of interest to our community; and
3. Share this information via email and social media.

Remember, if we do not speak out for ourselves, few others will do so on our behalf.

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IABA National President