

KEITH ELLISON SALUTES MOHAMMED SALMAN HAMDANI

As I predicted in my liveblog, the most emotional moment of Peter King's MUAC Hearing came when Keith Ellison saluted the sacrifice of Mohammed Salman Hamdani.

Every American, including Muslim Americans, suffered on 9/11.

29 Muslims died at the World Trade Center;

3 Muslims died in the hijacked planes (United Flight 175 and American Flight 11).

Muslims stood with the rest of America united in grief, in their resolve to protect America. Along with Americans of all faiths, Muslim Americans rushed in to save and rescue victims of Al-Qaeda's terrorism.

Let me close with a story, but remember that it's only one of many American stories that could be told. Mohammed Salman Hamdani was a 23-year-old paramedic, a New York City police cadet and a Muslim American. He was one of those brave first responders who tragically lost their lives in the 9/11 terrorist attacks almost a decade ago. As The New York Times eulogized, "He wanted to be seen as an all-American kid. He wore No. 79 on the high school football team in Bayside, Queens, where he lived, and he was called Sal by his friends... He became a research assistant at Rockefeller University and drove an ambulance part-time. One Christmas, he sang in Handel's Messiah in Queens. He saw all the Star Wars movies, and it was

well known that his new Honda was the one with "Yung Jedi" license plates.

Mr. Hamdani bravely sacrificed his life to try and help others on 9/11. After the tragedy some people tried to smear his character solely because of his Islamic faith. Some people spread false rumors and speculated that he was in league with the attackers only because he was Muslim. It was only when his remains were identified that these lies were fully exposed.

Mohammed Salman Hamdani was a fellow American who gave his life for other Americans. His life should not be defined as a member of an ethnic group or a member of a religion, but as an American who gave everything for his fellow citizens.

King's cold response to Sheila Jackson Lee's request that each member be permitted an opening statement is not the only point in the hearing when he looked like an asshole, though: he twice interrupted his own witness, Abdirizak Bihi, as well as interrupting Jackson Lee. The lesson being, I guess, that if you want to end radicalization in the Muslim community the thing to do is not let brown people speak.