

Calabrese Campaign Support Connects to a Broader Advocacy Network

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Public records and archived webpages connect Curtis Calabrese’s campaign to Emgage Action and Internationalist Law Center founder Lydia Ghuman, whose organizational relationships extend to CAIR, DAWN and related advocacy initiatives.

Florida officials have approved state-law terrorist designations for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the Muslim Brotherhood and Antifa. Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Florida Cabinet approved the designations on Sept. 29, 2026, under Section 943.03102, Florida Statutes. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement published notices in the Florida Administrative Register on Oct. 6, setting an effective date of Nov. 5.

The Cabinet separately approved Florida’s recognition of more than 90 federally designated foreign terrorist organizations, including several transnational drug cartels. The actions concerning CAIR, the Muslim Brotherhood and Antifa are Florida state designations, not federal designations. The notices reviewed for this report do not designate Emgage, Democracy for the Arab World Now or the Internationalist Law Center.

Against that backdrop, an R30 LLC investigation identified a series of connections involving Curtis Calabrese, the Democratic candidate for Palm Beach County Commission District 4; Emgage Action; attorney Lydia Ghuman; and organizations connected through shared personnel, advocacy campaigns and public events.

Support for Calabrese

Emgage Action endorsed Calabrese in the 2026 election. An [Internet Archive capture of Emgage Action’s official endorsement page](#) listed “Dr. Curtis Calabrese” as its endorsed candidate for Palm Beach County Commissioner, District 4.

The endorsement was also displayed in Calabrese’s campaign materials. After the relationship began circulating on social media, within 24 hours references to the endorsement disappeared from both the campaign’s website and Emgage Action’s current endorsement page. R30 preserved the earlier campaign webpage, and the Emgage listing remains available through the Wayback Machine.

Independent voter-information services, including [Sway](#) and [Blue Voter Guide](#), continued to identify Emgage Action as a Calabrese endorser after the references disappeared from the organizations’ current websites.

Neither the campaign nor Emgage Action has publicly explained the changes. The chronology establishes that the endorsement was displayed and later removed. It does not establish who requested the removals or why.

Calabrese also received direct financial support from Lydia Ghuman, an attorney and the founder and executive director of the Internationalist Law Center, or ILC. Calabrese’s official campaign report for

Oct. 3 through Oct. 16 lists a \$250 contribution from Ghuman on Oct. 8. The contribution was reported in her individual capacity.

Ghuman, the ILC and CAIR

Ghuman and the ILC have pursued litigation, public advocacy and organized participation at Palm Beach County Commission meetings opposing the county's investment of public funds in Israel Bonds.

The ILC has several documented institutional connections to CAIR and its national executive director, Nihad Awad.

In September 2026, CAIR issued a [statement attributed to CAIR, CAIR-Florida and the ILC](#) condemning attorney Noura Erakat's arrest during a Palm Beach County meeting and criticizing the county's Israel Bonds investments. The statement included remarks from Awad.

A [CBS12 report](#) separately quoted Ghuman and Awad expressing aligned positions concerning the incident.

The ILC also partnered with Muslims for Just Futures to produce a [primer opposing Florida's domestic-terrorism designation framework](#). The primer specifically defended CAIR and CAIR-Florida against designation. A publicly indexed statement from the project's organizer credited Ghuman with helping develop it.

The DAWN connection

The ILC repeatedly collaborated on Israel Bonds-related advocacy with Democracy for the Arab World Now, commonly known as DAWN, while Awad served as chairman of DAWN's board.

In November 2024, DAWN and the ILC submitted a [joint communication to a United Nations special rapporteur](#). The submission addressed Israel Bonds and businesses associated with Israeli settlements.

DAWN later published additional Israel Bonds advocacy quoting Ghuman in her capacity as ILC executive director. These records establish a direct institutional relationship between the ILC and an organization chaired by Awad during the relevant period.

Connections between CAIR and Emgage

Emgage Foundation, Emgage Action and Emgage PAC are affiliated but legally distinct organizations. Emgage Foundation conducts tax-exempt civic-engagement work, Emgage Action is a Section 501(c)(4) advocacy and lobbying organization, and Emgage PAC participates in electoral politics. The Calabrese endorsement located by R30 was attributed to Emgage Action.

The relationship between the Emgage network and CAIR includes personnel overlap and recurring coalition activity.

Khurram Wahid, an Emgage founding figure and former chairman of Emgage Action's board, previously served as a legal adviser to CAIR and directed its civil-rights office. A [U.S. Commission on Civil Rights record](#) identifies Wahid as a CAIR legal adviser.

Emgage's [2023 annual report](#) identifies CAIR-Florida as a partner in the Florida Muslim Civic Table. Emgage and CAIR entities have also participated together in legislative advocacy days, candidate forums, voter-engagement projects and public-policy coalitions.

These records show a continuing institutional relationship between separate organizations, rather than an isolated appearance at a single event.

Connections between Emgage and DAWN

Emgage Action also has documented connections to DAWN.

It was among the organizations involved in DAWN's [2023 "Nakba 75" event](#). Emgage Action was later listed, along with CAIR, as a sponsor of DAWN's [2024 Integrity Awards gala](#). Awad attended that event as DAWN's board chairman.

The resulting network can be summarized as follows:

- Emgage Action endorsed Calabrese.
- Ghuman contributed to Calabrese's campaign.
- Ghuman's ILC collaborated directly with DAWN.
- Awad chaired DAWN's board during the relevant period.
- The ILC joined CAIR and CAIR-Florida in public advocacy.
- The ILC helped produce material defending CAIR and CAIR-Florida.
- CAIR and Emgage have documented personnel and coalition connections.
- Emgage Action participated in and sponsored DAWN events.

Assessment

The records establish recurring institutional collaboration, personnel overlap and issue alignment among CAIR, DAWN and the Emgage network. They also place the ILC within related Israel Bonds and CAIR-defense initiatives. Calabrese became a common political recipient through Emgage Action's endorsement and Ghuman's campaign contribution.

The records do not establish common ownership, centralized control, unlawful conduct or coordination of the political support given to Calabrese. Nor do they establish that Calabrese adopted every position taken by the organizations or individuals within the network.

The connections are nevertheless relevant to understanding the sources of political support surrounding Calabrese's campaign and the institutional relationships among the entities involved. The removal of the Emgage endorsement from both current websites does not erase the documented relationship; it leaves an unanswered question about why the endorsement was no longer being presented to voters.

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