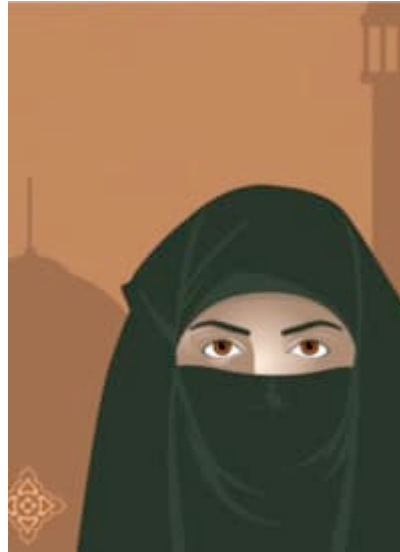




## Cambridge Schools Celebrate Muslim Holidays

Catholic Online reports that Cambridge, Massachusetts, will begin closing public schools for one Muslim holiday next year, with schools given two holidays, Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adah, to choose from. Marc McGovern on the Cambridge School Committee says that the measure is needed to step back from the hysteria which McGovern believes paints all Muslims as terrorists.



There are an estimated 24,000 Muslims in Massachusetts, or 0.4% of the population, which means that carving out a uniquely Muslim school holiday is not related to attendance problems.

Jews are a much larger percentage of the American population, and yet almost no school systems across the country provide school holidays for Rosh Hashonah or Yom Kippur. The New York City School System did provide these Jewish holidays, eventually, because so many teachers and school administrators were observant Jews that it made sense.

Mormons, who have a large and growing population in America, have two holy days during the school year — April 6, the day on which the church was founded, and May 15, when John the Baptist visited Joseph Smith, according to Mormon traditions. There is no indication that the Cambridge School Committee is pondering granting one or both of those days as school holidays out of respect for Mormons — this in spite of the fact that Mitt Romney, perhaps the most important Mormon political figure in history, was governor of Massachusetts.

There are eight Sikh holidays during the school year, and Sikhs were, mistakenly, associated after September 11, 2001, with Islamic terrorism because Sikhs wear turbans and come from central Asia. There are about one million Sikhs in America, making that religious group roughly comparable in population to Muslims in America. Sikhs also have suffered horrific persecution at the hands of Muslims in the Indian Subcontinent, so granting Muslims a holiday while denying it to Sikhs is particularly noxious. Yet the Cambridge School Committee has not, it seems, considered granting students a day off for Sikh religious holidays.

Zoroastrians also have suffered greatly at the hands of Islam, which almost totally uprooted this religion from its historic home in Iran. Zoroastrians celebrate three very important holidays during the school year, and this religion — very much alive today in America, India, and (persecuted) in Iran — is by the standards of almost any student of comparative religion, one of the world's great faiths. Yet not a faith that merits consideration from the Cambridge School Committee.

The Baha'i also arose in Iran and also suffered grievous persecutions under the Muslims. Yet this faith remains a vibrant and gentle religion, with millions of adherents around the world. There are a number of religious holidays during the school year which the Baha'i celebrate. None, however, seems to have



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on October 14, 2010

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been deemed worthy of serious consideration by the Cambridge School Committee.

Jehovah's Witnesses reject all holidays as spiritually improper. Requiring Jehovah's Witnesses to stay home on a Muslim holiday would violate their faith (just as it would on any other holiday). The Cambridge School Committee may also not know that the Christian year, for most Christians, begins at Advent, usually mid-December, and that although the majority of American students, these Christian boys and girls are compelled to attend school on Advent, as well as many other holy days (the origin of our word "holiday") during the school year.

So what is happening in Cambridge? Political correctness run amuck. The one major religion that compels its adherents to wage holy war against every other religion and which inspired the worst terrorist attack in American history is to be given unique privileged status not granted to the many peaceful religions which live in our country without jihad talk or honor killings. Is there a good solution? How about minimizing, not increasing, the role of government in the educational process and ceasing to use state power to try to make us more sensitive to others. Leave private matters to ordinary Americans.



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