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The Rt. Hon. Nick Clegg MP,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Lord President of the Council,  
House of Commons  
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Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Dear Mr Clegg,

We write concerning news reports that have come to our attention which reveal comments of an anti-Muslim nature made by the Liberal Democrat candidate for the by-election seat in Newcomen Ward in the Redcar and Cleveland constituency, Dave Stones.

Mr Stones has allegedly posted remarks on his Facebook page which suggest a deep antipathy towards Muslim beliefs. He is said to have called for the setting up of a 'pork rib' restaurant and a 'topless bar' called 'You Mecca me Hot' opposite the Park51 Center in New York, purportedly to test the level of tolerance amongst Muslims.

As you will know, the general election of last year was punctuated with instances of anti-Muslim comments and campaign material as candidates sought to play on racial and religious issues for electoral gain. We had cause to report these to the Electoral Commission and I have enclosed a copy of this report here for your interest.

We are particularly concerned at the impact Mr Stones may have on perceptions of anti-Muslim activity and their acceptance in the Liberal Democrat party. We are aware of your important interventions where anti-Muslim bigotry has manifested itself, significantly the secret briefing circulated by Policy Exchange against the Global Peace and Unity event in 2009.

We hope you will appreciate the serious nature and potential impact of Mr Stones' comments and conduct on British Muslims and act accordingly to advance the case for the Liberal Democrats as a party that fully respects the UK's religious pluralism; and as a political party which adheres to a zero-tolerance policy towards expressions of any form of religious or racial bigotry within its ranks.

Yours sincerely,

Shenaz Bunglawala  
Head of Research