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Shaarik H. Zafar serves as a Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of Civil Rights & Civil Liberties at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. His duties include: providing legal and policy advice to Department leadership on civil rights and civil liberties issues; investigating and resolving complaints filed by members of the public; working with other Federal agencies to develop and strengthen the U.S. Government's public outreach initiatives; regularly meeting with the American Arab, Muslim, Sikh, and South Asian communities to discuss ways to strengthen homeland security while protecting fundamental rights and liberties; and helping law enforcement officials better engage with ethnic and religious minorities.

Prior to joining DHS, Mr. Zafar served as the Special Counsel for Post 9/11 National Origin Discrimination at the U.S. Department of Justice, where he led DOJ's Initiative to Combat Post 9/11 Discriminatory Backlash. As Special Counsel, his duties included: (1) coordinating the investigation of hate crimes, employment discrimination, and other unlawful forms of national origin and religious discrimination; (2) conducting outreach to vulnerable communities to provide them information about Federal civil rights protections; and (3) advising the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights on issues affecting the American Arab, Muslim, Sikh, and South Asian communities. In September 2005, he delivered a speech on "Improving the Effectiveness of Law Enforcement in Preventing and Combating Hate Crimes" at the Second OSCE Meeting of Police Experts in Vienna, Austria.

Mr. Zafar is a 1997 graduate of the Plan II Honors Program at the University of Texas at Austin, and received his J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law in 2000. Prior to joining the Federal government, he worked as a civil litigator at one of the oldest law firms in Houston, Texas, and as a summer associate at the Almaty, Kazakhstan office of an international law firm.