

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

3 HOUSE BILL 2648

By: Echols

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5  
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to officers; amending 51 O.S. 2011,  
8 Section 253, which relates to the free exercise of  
9 religion; prohibiting any governmental entity from  
10 closing any place of worship during an emergency; and  
11 providing an effective date.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

13 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 51 O.S. 2011, Section 253, is  
14 amended to read as follows:

15 Section 253. A. Except as provided in subsection B of this  
16 section, no governmental entity shall substantially burden a  
17 person's free exercise of religion even if the burden results from a  
18 rule of general applicability.

19 B. No governmental entity shall substantially burden a person's  
20 free exercise of religion unless it demonstrates that application of  
21 the burden to the person is:

- 22 1. Essential to further a compelling governmental interest; and  
23 2. The least restrictive means of furthering that compelling  
24 governmental interest.

1        C. Any order or rule issued by any governmental entity pursuant  
2 to an emergency that requires closure of any place of worship  
3 entitled to the religious exemption found in Section 501(c)(3) of  
4 Title 26 of the United States Code shall be considered a substantial  
5 burden even if the order or rule is one of general applicability.

6        SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2021.

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8        58-1-6475        AB        01/06/21

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