

1 **SENATE FLOOR VERSION**

2 March 23, 2021

3 ENGROSSED HOUSE
4 BILL NO. 2648

5 By: Hill, Echols, Hardin
6 (David), Townley, Burns,
7 Steagall, Crosswhite Hader,
8 West (Kevin), Cornwell,
9 Caldwell (Chad), Kendrix,
10 Dills, Grego, Boles,
11 Conley, Gann, Mize, Stark,
12 Russ, Roberts (Eric),
13 Roberts (Sean), McDugle,
14 Caldwell (Trey), Bashore,
15 Wolfley, Moore, West
16 (Tammy), Miller, Smith,
17 Dempsey, Baker, Lepak,
18 McCall, Sims, Lawson,
19 Williams, Roe, Humphrey,
20 O'Donnell, Phillips,
21 Manger, Boatman and McBride
22 of the House

23 and

24 Bullard of the Senate

17 An Act relating to officers; amending 51 O.S. 2011,
18 Section 253, which relates to the free exercise of
19 religion; prohibiting any governmental entity from
20 closing any place of worship during an emergency; and
21 providing an effective date.

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

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

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

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

- 8 1. Essential to further a compelling governmental interest; and
- 9 2. The least restrictive means of furthering that compelling
10 governmental interest.

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

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

17 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
18 March 23, 2021 - DO PASS
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