

Americans have a fear about what Muslims might do

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Last week I wrote about a case in Bernard Township in New Jersey in which the Thomas More Law Center alleged that a local mosque was using intimidation tactics to coerce the local government into granting a permit for the construction of a mosque. I also submitted that the use of RLUIPA, the law that has helped so many churches escape discrimination and denial of building permits, would also be used to allow the construction of mosques as well.

In that article, I reported a quote by the New York Times that said that RLUIPA “was intended to protect all religious faiths. Eleven of the last 13 cases brought by the Justice Department – including three in the last month – have involved Muslims.”

This week, on the Law of the Land website, another case has surfaced. Under the headline of the article Fed. Dist Court in VA Finds Facts Sufficient to Support Substantial Burden and Nondiscrimination RLUIPA Claims, it describes how the Islamic Center of Culpeper (ICC) had been denied a building permit by Culpeper County in Virginia. The complaint alleges that the county used regulations involving the use of septic tanks as a reason for denying the permit, and that the real reason for denial of the permit was to prevent the mosque from being built. The complaint was filed by the United States Attorney’s Office on behalf of the mosque.

Not enough information was included in the article to make any bystander judgment on the actual merits of the case, but in a general way I can say that these sorts of things have happened to churches as well. Just one of the more outrageous cases I could point to was the Rocky Mountain Christian Church in Boulder County, Colorado. So in that regard, I could say to this mosque, welcome to the club.

On the other hand, while local governments that attempt to prevent churches from building in their communities do so mostly for economic reasons, there is real and serious fear in allowing Islam to gain a foothold in our communities. It is a problem that we as Americans have to find a way to deal with in a fair way that provides protection for all involved.

But if it were really easy to do so, it would have been done by now. I have stated in the past that I see Islam as an ideology, not a religion, yet for the vast majority of Muslims, I would readily concede that it is sincerely practiced as a religion. As such, our Constitution and our laws defend their right to worship just as it does to believers of all other religions. But Americans are rightfully worried.

In July of 2016, Breitbart ran an article entitled Poll: Americans Increasingly Want Safeguards Against Islamic Sharia Law. The article stated that “...new polling data shows an overwhelming majority of Americans are increasingly cognizant of the threat Sharia, Islam’s totalitarian religio-

political ‘law’ poses to their basic liberties, asserting that Sharia adherents should be identified and prevented from entering the United States”

That same poll asked if individuals entering the country should be screened to see if they supported Sharia law. Seventy-one percent said yes. The next question asked if they should be allowed to enter the country if they did. Eighty percent said that they should not. The final question asked if those entering the country, even as visitors, should uphold our Constitution. Seventy-eight percent answered in the affirmative.

Another 2012 poll was taken among 600 Muslims living in the United States, and it asked if criticism of Islam should be allowed under the First Amendment. Fifty-eight percent said criticism should not be allowed. Forty-five percent of them said that those who criticize Islam in the United States should face criminal charges. Three years later, another poll indicated that fifty-one percent of Muslims believed that Muslims living in America should have the choice of being governed by our laws or by Sharia.

Phillip Haney, a Department of Homeland Security whistleblower and the author of the book *See Something Say Nothing*, has stated that the goal of the Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America (AMJA) is to implement Sharia law in North America. Per the article, “Well-accepted by the broader American Muslim community, the Islamic scholars affiliated with AMJA have attained influential positions in universities, Islamic centers, and mosques throughout the United States. AMJA scholars train American imams, and issue online “fatwas,” Islamic Sharia rulings, to guide individual Muslims.”

Abdul Razak Ali Artan was purported to be a nice, likeable Somali Muslim student at Ohio State, but he suddenly attacked and injured 11 people after posting a rant about ISIS and Anwar al-Awlaki to his Facebook account, and likely received encouragement to commit his attacks for Muslim sources.

This is what Americans fear about Islam – the uncertainty that Muslims that make their homes in our communities will remain peaceful and live according to our laws, or suddenly turn against us. This is a real problem that Congress and Constitutionalsists need to address soon, because Muslims are coming to America by the thousands, and RLUIPA is not the answer.



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