

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TULSA SAY NO TO HATE COALITION
URGES REJECTION OF SQ 755**

Tulsa, Oklahoma (September 1, 2010): The Tulsa Say No To Hate Coalition urges the rejection of State Question 755, the proposed Oklahoma International Law Amendment, that will appear on the November 2, 2010, general election ballot. SQ 755, a legislatively-referred constitutional amendment, would prohibit courts from using international law or Sharia law when deciding cases. Sharia law is Islamic law based on two principal sources: the Koran and the teaching of Mohammed.

Reference in SQ 755 to "international law," does little to disguise the focus of the proposed ban: Sharia law. Oklahoma Representative Rex Duncan (R-Sand Springs), the chief author of SQ 755, has made that clear. Rep. Duncan called Sharia law a "cancer," and noted that "SQ 755 will constitute a pre-emptive strike against Sharia law coming to Oklahoma." He added: "While Oklahoma is still able to defend itself against this sort of hideous invasion, we should do so."

SQ 755 is both unwise and unnecessary. The measure simply fans the flames of bigotry against Muslims by suggesting, without evidence or justification, that Oklahomans somehow risk the rule of Islamic law. Supporters of SQ 755 have cited no case in which Sharia law has actually been applied in an Oklahoma court. The application of Sharia law by Oklahoma courts is a phantom threat, and SQ 755 is but a solution in search of a problem.

SQ 755 is a thinly-veiled attempt to drive a wedge between Oklahomans and Islam at a time when "Islamaphobia" has reached a fever pitch. Fear-mongering against Muslims, the practitioners of Islam, serves the interests of no one.

Here in Oklahoma, just as is the case all across the land, Muslims are our friends and neighbors; our doctors and lawyers; our teachers and classmates; our bosses and colleagues. We are one. We are Oklahomans. We are Americans.

Let your voices be heard: Oklahoma will not tolerate the bullying of its citizens, whether based on religion or any of the other dimensions of diversity that add richness to our State. Oklahomans have far more pressing issues with which to deal—a faltering economy; a lackluster public education system; and a struggling healthcare system, just to name a few. Let us marshal our collective resources around issues that really matter.

The Tulsa Say No To Hate Coalition urges Oklahomans to vote "NO" on SQ 755 on November 2nd. The defeat of this measure will be a victory for all Oklahomans.

ABOUT THE
TULSA SAY NO TO HATE COALITION

The Tulsa Say No To Hate Coalition is, first and foremost, an open-ended volunteer network of community-based and civic organizations established as a forum in which to share trends & development, best practices, and calendar events & activities related generally to diversity and, more specifically, to hate-based activity in the Tulsa area.

- The Tulsa Say No To Hate Coalition is committed to working toward a united Tulsa that respects itself as a community, values all of its people, and provides justice and equality for all.
- The Tulsa Say No To Hate Coalition seeks to preserve the dignity and fundamental freedoms of all people.
- The Tulsa Say No To Hate Coalition serves as a clearinghouse for information on hate-based activity in the Tulsa region and operates as an information exchange for those seeking to disseminate or receive such information.
- The Tulsa Say No To Hate Coalition contests hate-based bigotry and violence directed at a person's race, ethnicity, gender, religion, national origin, ability, ancestry or sexual orientation.
- Members of the include: City of Tulsa Human Rights Commission, City of Tulsa Human Rights Department, City of Tulsa Police Department, Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa, Coalition of Hispanic Organizations, Islamic Society of Tulsa, Jewish Federation of Tulsa, Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice, Oklahomans for Equality, TEN - The Equality Network , Tulsa City-County Library, Tulsa County Sheriff's Department, Tulsa Global Alliance, Tulsa Interfaith Alliance, Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry, Tulsa PFLAG, Tulsa Public Schools, and YWCA Tulsa.
- The Tulsa Say No To Hate Coalition champions diversity and advocates for those against whom bias, bigotry, and racism may be directed. Through our efforts and those of like-minded individuals and institutions, the Tulsa Say No To Hate Coalition seeks to improve the cultural, spiritual, physical, emotional, and economic well-being of all the people of Tulsa.
- Specific objectives of the Tulsa Say No To Hate Coalition include:
 - *Eliminating hate-based bigotry and violence in our community;*
 - *Incorporating the needs and issues of all of our diverse community in planning and strategic processes throughout the community;*
 - *Increasing understanding of the identities and experiences of all members of our diverse community through curricular and other educational initiatives; and*
 - *Providing positive leadership in the realm of diversity.*

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