



Written by [James Heiser](#) on March 3, 2011

Tenn. Bill Would Make Following Sharia Law a Felony

Tennessee is the latest state to join the fight to resist the imposition of Sharia Law within the United States. A bill has been introduced by Sen. Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro, left) in the state legislature which would make following Sharia Law a felony punishable by 15 years in jail.



The bill quickly drew fire from Islamic activists. Thus, for example, Remziya Suleyman (identified in a story for WMCTV.com as “policy coordinator for the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition”) declared regarding the proposed legislation that “This is an anti-Muslim bill that makes it illegal to be a Muslim in the state of Tennessee”. Sarah Thompson (a spokeswoman for the Islamic Society of North America, who is also quoted in the WMCTV story) declared that “The way that it’s worded makes the assumption that any practice of Islam is a practice of terrorism... And that’s a dangerous line to walk. It excludes the millions of Muslims that are practicing peaceably from the ability to do so.”

Given the fact that Tennessee currently has a population of approximately 6.2 million people, one might question Thompson’s math — just how many Muslims does she imagine actually live in the state under consideration?

The usual efforts by activists within the Islamic community may be perceived as spreading fear, uncertainty and doubt regarding any attempt to keep Sharia law out of America’s secular courts. However, by drawing attention to the measure under consideration in Tennessee, the advocates of Sharia law may find their efforts backfiring on them. Ketron’s proposed legislation ([Senate Bill 1028](#)) offers an insightful summary of the role of Sharia law within Islamic society; if the public will take time to actually read SB1028, they may find it a helpful primer on the larger controversy which surrounds Sharia. Near the beginning of the 20-page bill, one reads a succinct and accurate assessment of the place of Sharia Law within Islamic society:

Sharia, as defined and understood by traditional and authoritative sharia scholars and leaders, is a legal-political-military doctrinal system combined with certain religious beliefs; further, sharia is based historically and traditionally on a full corpus of law and jurisprudence termed fiqh and usul al-fiqh, respectively, dealing with all aspects of a sharia-adherent’s personal and social life and political society. Sharia serves as national and local law in several foreign jurisdictions;



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Sharia as a political doctrine requires all its adherents to actively support the establishment of a political society based upon sharia as foundational or supreme law and the replacement of any political entity not governed by sharia with a sharia political order;

Sharia requires all its adherents to actively and passively support the replacement of America's constitutional republic, including the representative government of this state with a political system based upon sharia;

(6) Sharia in particular includes a war doctrine known as jihad, which is an organic, intrinsic and central feature of the laws and traditions of sharia due to a consensus among sharia authorities throughout the ages;

(7) Jihad and sharia are inextricably linked, with sharia formulating and commanding jihad, and jihad being waged for the purpose of imposing and instituting sharia;

As noted in [an article](#) for *The Tennessean*, "The bill exempts any peaceful practice of Islam." Whether Ketron's bill adequately distinguishes personal religious practices from those aspects of Sharia Law which would fundamentally interfere with the legal system of the United States is undoubtedly a matter which will be studied and debated during the legislative process. Ketron's emphasis on those aspect of Sharia Law which most immediately pertain to waging Jihad may provide an approach for amending the bill during the process of its consideration.

The move to limit the influence of Sharia Law in Tennessee is hardly an isolated incident. The people of Oklahoma led the way is pushing back against the advocates of Sharia Law; [70 percent of voters](#) supported a measure in that state's election last November which would have amended the Oklahoma constitution to ban the use of Sharia law in the courts of the "Sooner State." However, the measure was [thwarted by a federal judge](#), who deemed the constitutional amendment to be "unconstitutional."

Since the vote in Oklahoma, other states — including Wyoming and Texas — are considering various statutory means to protect their citizens from the imposition of Islamic Sharia Law.



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