ENGROSSED HOUSE
CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION NO. 1023 By: Kern of the House

and

Brinkley of the Senate

A Concurrent Resolution relating to religious freedom; encouraging Oklahomans to commemorate and celebrate January 16 as Religious Freedom Day; and providing for distribution.

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson counted the freedom of worship as one of America's greatest blessings; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson said it was "a liberty deemed in other countries incompatible with good government and yet proved by our experience to be its best support"; and

WHEREAS, the contributions of people of faith are and have been important to our society, and in order to maintain a pluralistic society we must work to ensure equal treatment of faith-based organizations and people of faith without religious bigotry in any form; and

WHEREAS, each year since 1993, the President of the United States has proclaimed January 16 to be national "Religious Freedom Day"; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, the United States Department of Education issued guidelines explaining teachers' and students' religious liberties. These guidelines outline seven forms of protected freedom of speech about religion:

1. Students can pray, read their Bibles, and talk about their faith at school during school hours;

2. Students can organize prayer groups and Bible studies and announce their meetings;

3. Students can express their faith in their class work and homework;

4. Teachers can organize prayer groups and Bible studies with their colleagues;

5. Students may be able to go off campus to have a Bible study during school hours;

6. Students can express their faith at a school event; and

7. Students can express their faith at their graduation ceremony; and

WHEREAS, it is important that all Oklahomans recognize the annual Presidential proclamation of Religious Freedom Day and all teachers and students be informed of the U.S. Department of Education's "Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools".

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 53RD OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the Oklahoma Legislature hereby encourages all Oklahomans to commemorate and celebrate January 16 as "Religious Freedom Day" each year through appropriate events and activities in homes, schools, and places of worship.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to Governor Mary Fallin and to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Janet Barresi.

Adopted by the House of Representatives the 28th day of March, 2012.

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Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives

Adopted by the Senate the ____ day of _____, 2012.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate