

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

3 SENATE BILL 216

By: Burns

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to the Oklahoma Religious Freedom
8 Act; amending 51 O.S. 2011, Section 253, which
9 relates to burden upon free exercise of religion;
10 establishing certain actions by government entities
11 against religious institutions as a substantial
burden on the free exercise of religion; prohibiting
restricted access to certain facilities; and
providing an effective date.

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

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

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

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

23 1. Essential to further a compelling governmental interest; and
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1 2. The least restrictive means of furthering that compelling
2 governmental interest.

3 C. The closure of a religious institution or the declaration of
4 a religious institution as nonessential by a governmental entity as
5 defined pursuant to Section 252 of this title shall be deemed a
6 substantial burden on the free exercise of religion that is not the
7 least restrictive means of furthering a compelling governmental
8 interest. A government entity shall not restrict access to
9 religious facilities or gatherings as long as such institutions are
10 not engaged in illegal activities.

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

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