

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

SENATE BILL 678

By: Jett

AS INTRODUCED

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

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

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

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

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

1. Essential to further a compelling governmental interest; and

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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