

1                   **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - FLOOR VERSION**

2                                   STATE OF OKLAHOMA

3                                   1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

4 HOUSE BILL 2648

By: **Hill, Echols, Hardin**  
**(David), Townley and Burns**

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7                                   AS INTRODUCED

8                   An Act relating to officers; amending 51 O.S. 2011,  
9                   Section 253, which relates to the free exercise of  
10                  religion; prohibiting any governmental entity from  
11                  closing any place of worship during an emergency; and  
12                  providing an effective date.

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. Any order or rule issued by any governmental entity pursuant  
4 to an emergency that requires closure of any place of worship  
5 entitled to the religious exemption found in Section 501(c) (3) of  
6 Title 26 of the United States Code shall be considered a substantial  
7 burden even if the order or rule is one of general applicability.

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

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10 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON STATES RIGHTS, dated 02/03/2021 -  
11 DO PASS, As Coauthored.

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