



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 10-0970, **Version:** 2

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### Resolution Reaffirming Religious Freedom in Response to Recent Activities and Encouraging Participation in Religious Freedom Day Activities

Whereas, The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution has enshrined religious freedom as a fundamental right and Thomas Jefferson considered it to be “the most inalienable and sacred of all human rights;”

Whereas, Since the foundations of this country, this freedom has historically been extended to people of all religions and those who are nonreligious, as seen in the Virginia Statute on Religious Freedom in 1779, explicitly referencing but not limited to Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and Atheism, along with Christianity;

Whereas, In recent weeks there has been an increase in anti-Muslim rhetoric in the public discourse, especially surrounding the construction of the Park51 Islamic Community Center, formerly known as Cordoba House, in the borough of Manhattan in New York City;

Whereas, This anti-Muslim rhetoric has translated into violent actions across the nation. On August 24, 2010, Ahmed H. Sharif was stabbed in New York by someone who attacked him because he was a Muslim. In the early morning of August 28th, parts of the construction to the Islamic Center in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, were set on fire;

Whereas, On September 10, 2010, a burned Qur'an was found at the front entrance of the Islamic Center of East Lansing, Michigan;

Whereas, Ann Arbor, Michigan is home to a sizeable Muslim community that is put at risk by the rise in anti-Muslim activities;

Whereas, On October 18, 2004 the Ann Arbor City Council unanimously passed a resolution recognizing the importance of religious freedom and affirming that, "Democracy and the freedoms it engenders cannot exist without civil discourse that shows tolerance for all beliefs;"

Whereas, The Council on American Islamic Relations - Michigan, and local interfaith organizations have asked that communities and their elected leaders affirm their commitments to religious freedom and tolerance;

RESOLVED, That the City Council of Ann Arbor continues to affirm its commitment to the full rights and dignity for people of all religions and those who are nonreligious, promotes a community of respect and compassion for all people, and condemns harassment and violence based on religious bias;

RESOLVED, That the City Council of Ann Arbor encourages community members and organizations to participate in Religious Freedom Day activities on the weekend of January 16, 2011, as a time to

learn about different faith traditions and to foster respect for religious diversity; and

RESOLVED, That the City Clerk be directed to transmit copies of this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to each Senator and Representative from Michigan in the Congress of the United States.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the City Council, and the Clerk of the Council shall attest to and certify the vote adopting this resolution.

**As Amended by Ann Arbor City Council on September 20, 2010**

AYES: Councilmembers Rapundalo, Kunselman, Higgins, Teall, Angliln, Briere, Smith, Derezinski, Taylor, Hohnke and Mayor Hieftje, 11;

NAYS: 0.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

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Jacqueline Beaudry, City Clerk