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STATE & LOCAL

Group Launches Media Blitz in Oklahoma for Anti-Shariah Ballot Initiative

By Stephen Clark

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AP

A group opposed to 'Islamofascism' has launched a media blitz in Oklahoma supporting a state constitutional amendment that would prohibit courts from considering Shariah or international law in their decisions.

A group vowing to fight "Islamofascism" has launched a media blitz in Oklahoma supporting a state constitutional amendment that would prohibit the courts from considering Islamic or other international law when ruling on cases in Sooner State courtrooms.

The campaign by Act! For America, founded by Lebanese American journalist Brigitte Gabriel, includes a radio ad that began airing

Monday, opinion articles and robo-calls from former CIA director and Tulsa native James Woolsey urging residents to vote for the ballot initiative.

The group says the constitutional amendment will prevent the takeover of Oklahoma by Islamic extremists who want to undo America from the inside out.

"We want to make sure that the people in Oklahoma are educated about what Shariah law is all about and its ramifications," Gabriel, president and CEO of the group, told FoxNews.com. "We're not taking any chances with this initiative passing marginally. We hope it passes with great victory."

But opponents say the initiative is the latest example of Muslims being unfairly targeted and could discourage foreign companies from doing business in the state if they believe international agreements won't be honored in court.

"We take a stand in opposition to the proposed amendment," said Muneer Awad, executive director of the Oklahoma branch of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR). He added that Shariah law taking effect in the United States is constitutionally impossible.

"It's ridiculous that anyone would suggest it would happen," he told FoxNews.com "Our Constitution would not allow any religious law to supersede the existing laws."

Awad also said the initiative could threaten the 14,000 international companies in the state.

"What agreements will they want to have if they know they won't be enforced," Awad said.

The amendment comes as anti-Islam sentiment has flared recently in the U.S. over the construction of a mosque near Ground Zero and a Florida pastor's threat to burn Korans.

In two weeks, Oklahoma voters will decide the fate of State Question 755, or better known as "Save Our State" amendment after the Republican-controlled state legislature passed it with an 82-10 vote in the House and a 41-2 vote in the Senate.

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Job Approval	Approve	Disapprove	Spread
Obama	46.3%	48.7%	-2.4%

A poll by The Tulsa World in July found that 49 percent of voters support the amendment compared to 24 percent who opposed it and 27 percent who were undecided.

Congress	20.5%	72.8%	-52.3%
Direction of Country	Right Direction	Wrong Track	Spread
RCP Average	31.8%	62.2%	-30.4%

The group's [radio ad](#) recounts the story of a New Jersey family court judge's decision not to grant a restraining order to a woman who was sexually abused by her Moroccan husband and forced repeatedly to have sex with him. The judge ruled that her ex-husband felt he had behaved according to his Muslim beliefs and that he did not have "criminal desire to or intent to sexually assault" his wife.

"This is just one chilling example of how Islamic Shariah law has begun to penetrate America," the narrator says. "Help us stop Shariah law from coming to Oklahoma."

The ad did not mention that New Jersey's Appellate Court overturned the decision in July, ruling that the husband's religious beliefs were irrelevant and that the judge, in taking them into consideration, "was mistaken."

Gabriel said that part was excluded because it was beside the point.

"The point we are making is to think an American judge in an American courtroom in the 21st century would allow a woman to continually be tortured and raped by her husband for one year and did not consider it a crime -- that is unacceptable," she said. "To have one judge is one too many. That's why we want to make sure women will be protected from Shariah law."

Shariah is the basis of law in most Islamic countries and has been used in [Iran](#) and Somalia, among other places, to condone harsh punishments like amputations and stoning.

Gabriel argued that Shariah law is taking hold in Europe, noting that at least 85 Shariah courts are operating in Britain.

"When we look at Europe, it is a preview of what's coming to the United States," she said. "We want to make sure this does not happen here."

But Awad pointed out that there has not been one instance of Shariah law being proposed in Oklahoma.

"Even though it's laughable, it's pointing the fear toward the Muslim community," he said, noting that Muslims make up only 30,000 of the state's nearly 4 million residents -- less than 1 percent.

Awad said the authors of the ballot initiative have a history of targeting the Muslim community. Legislators have proposed forbidding Muslim women from wearing head garments in driver's license photos and recently refused to accept a Koran from a Muslim advisory council at an official state ceremony.

"It's just ridiculous having these politicians use fear tactics, which stigmatizes the Muslim community," he said.

When asked about the poll numbers showing a plurality of the state's residents support the amendment, Awad said, "It's unfortunate bashing the Muslim community is popular these days."

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