



**Oklahoma  
Conference  
Of Churches**

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## STANDING TOGETHER

### *Oklahoma Conference of Churches Calls for Solidarity with Muslim Neighbors*

**Oklahoma City, OK, February 19, 2015**— We are troubled by the alarmist, hateful Anti-Muslim rhetoric from both state political leaders and extremists following the announcement of Oklahoma Muslim Day at the State Capitol. Slated for Friday, February 27, the first “Muslim Day at the Capitol” invites the Oklahoma Muslim community from across the state to experience a day of civic engagement, learning about the legislative process, panel discussions on important issues, and the opportunity to meet elected officials. Hosted by the Oklahoma chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), this historic event will include Interfaith Jumah prayer led by Imam Imad Enchassi and leaders of other faith traditions.

Earlier this month two Oklahoma legislators, John Bennett and Dan Fisher, questioned the motives of the CAIR in planning a Muslim Day at the Capitol. This follows critical statements from Bennett last September and October Bennett who spoke out against CAIR and the Islamic faith, saying Islam was a cancer that needed to be “cut out.”

Alarmist, hateful Anti-Muslim rhetoric has become frighteningly mainstream, with politicians and pundits claiming Islam is a menacing anti-American force. In recent days there have been threats made against the safety of our Oklahoma Muslim friends who plan to take part in this important event, including political extremist groups using social media to build support of their factions.

We must do more than simply stand by in silence as these troubling statements regarding Islam and the Oklahoma Muslim community threaten our democracy and religious freedoms. A multitude of voices are calling on Oklahomans to stand together, showing compassion and love for our neighbors in faith. The Oklahoma Conference of Churches is proud to join with these reasonable voices who respect the diversity that is part of the makeup and strength of our great state and nation. We join with members of the Interfaith Alliance of Oklahoma, and the Central Oklahoma Community Forum in urging

Oklahomans of faith and goodwill to unite in compassion, and stand together in solidarity with our Muslim neighbors as they seek to enter the Capitol and engage in shaping our democracy.

The Oklahoma Conference of Churches Day 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Day at the Legislature is set for March 23, 2015. Just as Christian Oklahomans have been afforded the opportunity to learn the intricacies of state government, meet political representatives, and develop skills to be an effective advocate for the communities in which we live, so too should our Muslim neighbors in faith have an unimpeded opportunity to engage in a day of learning and civic engagement.

Come #STANDTOGETHER with our Muslim neighbors on Friday, February 27, 2015, especially from 8:30 am to 9:30 am and from 2:00 pm to 2:30 pm, and ensure Oklahoma remains a state where diverse traditions can thrive side by side by side.

*The Oklahoma Conference of Churches connects, motivates, and empowers the witness of Christian communities and individuals throughout Oklahoma on issues of faith and social justice. Founded in 1972, the OCC has a long history of ministry to the people of Oklahoma. Organizing disaster relief solutions, cooperating with government agencies to educate people on specific needs, and hosting events designed to inform and promote understanding and unity, the Oklahoma Conference of Churches touches the lives of people from all socio-economic ranks. Comprised of Christian denominations, Interfaith congregations, and community organizations, the OCC connects the voices and efforts of many groups for meaningful results.*

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