

Muslim advocacy group sues over Okla. Shariah ban

by [Adelle M. Banks](#)

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(RNS) A Muslim advocacy group filed suit Thursday (Nov. 4) in Oklahoma, saying a just-passed amendment forbidding judicial use of Islamic law is unconstitutional.

The suit, filed by the Oklahoma chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, seeks a federal district court's order to prevent board of elections officials from enacting the constitutional amendment. Seventy percent of Oklahoma voters Tuesday approved State Question 755, which bans the use of Shariah law in state courts.

Muneer Awad called the amendment a "gross transgression of the Establishment Clause" that would denigrate his faith. His 27-page complaint notes that the amendment's author, state Rep. Rex Duncan, said the amendment would ensure that courts did not "undermine" the "Judeo-Christian principles" on which America was founded.

"The only interest consistent with both the language and operation of the Shariah Ban is an interest in harming an unpopular minority," Awad's complaint reads. "The goal was to stigmatize Islam by establishing in the public's mind that Islam is something foreign and to be feared."

Awad said the law will also restrict his freedom to exercise his religion because courts would not be able to follow the instructions in his will that refer to Shariah law.