



May 12, 2021

The Honorable Tate Reeves, Governor of Mississippi
P.O. Box 139
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

VIA EMAIL

Dear Governor Reeves:

I write as President of the Religious Freedom Institute (RFI), an organization devoted to defending religious freedom for everyone. With great respect, I wish to bring to your attention the likely violation of federal religious liberty law by the City of Horn Lake, Mississippi.

On April 20, 2021, the city's board of aldermen voted 5-1 to deny approval of the local Muslim community's plan to build the Abraham House of God mosque. At the hearing, the aldermen who opposed the building cited insufficient water mains, noise, and traffic. As reported in the *Commercial Appeal*, one alderman who voted to deny approval to the Muslim citizens [explained](#), "The bottom line is there are people we're still in war with over there that are Muslim and we've got people coming back, vets from over there, that don't want to see that stuff, don't want to hear that stuff, don't want to be reminded of it."

The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA) provides that government may not "impose or implement a land use regulation in a manner that imposes a substantial burden on the religious exercise of a person, including a religious assembly or institution," except where justified by a "compelling governmental interest" that it pursues by the "least restrictive means." 42 U.S.C. § 2000cc (a). Moreover, RLUIPA prohibits discrimination "against any assembly or religious institution on the basis of religion or religious denomination."

George Washington, in his 1790 letter to the Jewish congregation of Newport, Rhode Island, wrote that "the Government of the United States...gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." Alone among the nations, America has developed this powerful model of liberty for all, and offers it to the world as a source of justice, stability, and human flourishing. Today, as religious freedom in America and around the world is under attack, those who uphold it—and uphold it for all—will be recorded as defenders of America's greatness.

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We respectfully request that you review the City of Horn Lake's refusal to permit the building of this mosque, and if you find that it contradicts the Founders' intent and federal law, that you use whatever means within your power and influence to bring about the reversal of that unfortunate decision.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas F. Farr".

Thomas Farr
President, Religious Freedom Institute

CC: U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Housing and Civil Enforcement
Section
The Honorable Allen Latimer, Mayor, City of Horn Lake
City of Horn Lake Board of Aldermen