



Michael C. Taylor

STERLING HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL

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Sterling Heights Mosque

by Michael Taylor on 02/13/11

The Planning Commission recently approved a special land use permit for a Muslim group to build a mosque in Sterling Heights. The proposed mosque complied with all city requirements, but that didn't stop hundreds opposed to the mosque from attending the meeting and contacting me. Some people opposed the mosque because of increased traffic, others because of lost tax revenue.

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Unfortunately though, most people who contacted me opposed the mosque because of an irrational fear of Islam and Muslim people. Having met and befriended many American Muslims in my life, I know that Islam--like Christianity--is a peaceful religion and Muslims abhor the terrorist acts that have come to define their religion in the minds of many Americans. Ignorance of Islam is not a valid reason to deny the rights and benefits of our constitution to millions of Americans.

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Americans must realize that the reason our democracy is an example around the world is because of our constitution, particularly the first amendment. The biggest threat to freedom and democracy is not Muslims or even radical extremist Muslims. The only thing that can destroy this country is the perpetuation of bigoted ideas based on ignorance and irrational hatred or fear. When those ideas begin to affect policy decisions then the freedoms guaranteed by the constitution will be meaningless for all Americans, not just Muslim Americans.

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