



July 12, 2017

Re: Vote NO on Rep. Franks' Amendment #68 to the National Defense Authorization Act

Dear Representative,

The American Civil Liberties Union strongly urges you to oppose Representative Franks' Amendment #68 to the National Defense Authorization Act, which would require the federal government to conduct "strategic assessments" of religious doctrine, singling out Muslims and Islam, in violation of the Constitution. A vote on the amendment is expected this afternoon. **The ACLU urges a NO vote on the amendment.**

This amendment raises significant constitutional concerns. By singling out one religion, and its religious schools of thought, religious practice, and religious leaders, the Franks Amendment runs afoul of the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection and religious freedom. The required governmental "strategic assessments" promote religious stereotypes and will likely result in targeting individuals based upon their race, ethnicity, national origin, or religious beliefs and practices. Furthermore, evidence-based studies show such characteristics are not good predictors of violence, making these assessments ineffective and a waste of resources. Security threats are most effectively addressed and assessed by focusing on violent behavior rather than beliefs. Finally, Congress and government agencies have no role in assessing religious beliefs or practices and determining their validity, significance, or function. The First Amendment protects against the abuse of governmental authority required by the Franks Amendment.

We strongly urge you to vote NO on Rep. Franks' amendment to prevent the stigmatization of communities by casting suspicion on an entire religion, chilling freedoms of speech, association, and religion.

For more information, please contact Manar Waheed, Legislative and Advocacy Counsel, at (202) 675-2300 or mwaheed@aclu.org.

Sincerely,

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