

John Bennett

- John Bennett is a **Republican politician who serves in the Oklahoma House of Representatives**. He has been in office since 2011.
- In a 2014 talk, **Bennett called Islam “a cancer in our nation that needs to be cut out.”** During this speech, Bennett said, “I read the Quran, the Hadiths, the Suras. 90% of it is violence.” Bennett also said he **believes there is no difference “between moderate and radical Islam,”** and said, “Islam is not even a religion; it is a political system that uses a deity to advance its agenda of global conquest,” which is a common claim of anti-Muslim groups. In a public meeting, Bennett also compared Muslims to Nazis and claimed “Islam doesn’t consider non-Muslims innocent.”
- In October 2016, Bennett presided over an Oklahoma state House interim study on “Radical Islam, Shariah Law, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Radicalization Process.” The event, which was praised on anti-Muslim websites, **featured numerous individuals who work with anti-Muslim groups**, including Frank Gaffney, the head of the Center for Security Policy. At the hearing, Bennett cast a local imam and the head of the local Council on American-Islamic Relations, who were both in attendance, as terrorists.
- In March 2017, Bennett’s legislative office asked three Muslim students to complete a **questionnaire about supposed Islamic beliefs** before meeting with him at his Oklahoma office. The survey was put together by ACT for America, a group that the SPLC considers “the largest grassroots anti-Muslim group in America.” The questionnaire included things like, “The Koran, the sunna of Mohammed and Sharia Law of all schools say that the husband can beat his wife. Do you beat your wife?” and “Mohammed was a killer of pagans, Christians and Jews that did not agree with him. Do you agree with his example?”
- The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), who organized a trip to the Oklahoma statehouse for young Muslims, criticized the questionnaire as “intentionally misinterpret[ing] ideas [from the Koran] to try to slander Muslims.” Bennett defended the document, stating it was “left for them to provoke their thought... If they are aware of what Islam, Sharia, CAIR, Jihadist [sic] stand for and still support it then they are part of the problem.”
- In 2014, Bennett published a comment on social media, **warning people to be “wary of Muslim Americans.”** After facing criticism, Rep. Bennett **refused to apologize** and said, “No. Because I’m right, and they know I’m right.” Like ACT for America and other anti-Muslim groups, Bennett has claimed that prominent U.S. Muslim groups are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, which he considers a terrorist organization.
- In July 2016, Bennett called on taxpayers to provide \$50,000 for a study focused on the threat of “radical Islam” in Oklahoma. In 2015, the Center for Security Policy bestowed on Bennett the “National Defender of Freedom” award.
- Bennett has called **the hijab a “medieval hood,”** stating that the “headgear is the first step towards institutional acceptance and legal imposition of Sharia law.”

IMPACT: State Rep. John Bennett believes Islam is a political ideology that needs to be “cut out” of the United States. Bennett has worked with anti-Muslim organizations, including the Center for Security Policy and ACT for America.

Last updated June 13, 2017.