

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4303

Statement for the Record

“Sharia-Free America: Why Political Islam & Sharia Law are Incompatible with the U.S.
Constitution: Part II”

Chairman Roy, thank you for the opportunity to provide a statement for the record regarding the Subcommittee hearing on Sharia and its incompatibility with the United States Constitution.

The United States was founded on the principle that rights come from the Creator and are protected through limited government under the Constitution. Any system that places itself above the Constitution challenges the unity and stability of the nation. Sharia functions not as a religion, but as a political and legal system claiming divine authority over human law.

Religious belief is inviolate. Conduct that functions as a political system is not. American jurisprudence draws this line clearly and must continue to do so. The Constitution guarantees equal rights, due process, and individual liberty, while Sharia assigns legal distinctions among individuals and bases authority on religious mandates.

Sharia creates unequal legal standards by distinguishing between Muslims and non-Muslims, men and women, and believers and dissenters. These distinctions undermine constitutional protections and expose individuals to social or legal pressure that conflicts with American guarantees of freedom and equality. The United States cannot sustain parallel legal systems because the rule of law depends on one constitutional standard applying equally to every citizen.

The principles of sharia do not recognize the right to life in the same way American constitutional law does, as they include punishments such as death for apostasy, defined as abandoning or insufficiently adhering to Islam, and for blasphemy, which can include criticizing Mohammed or Islam. Sharia also does not recognize the right to liberty as understood in the United States, as it requires submission to Allah above individual autonomy, restricts religious freedom and free speech, and does not provide equal treatment for women, or individuals living lifestyles deemed unacceptable under Islamic law.

Sharia imposes rules governing personal behavior, including dietary restrictions and limits on social activities, and does not recognize the right to pursue happiness in the American sense. Material or personal fulfillment is expected to be secondary to spiritual obligations, and individual choices are judged through the lens of religious and moral duty, with actions considered harmful or contrary to Islamic law discouraged or prohibited.

The American tradition of religious freedom depends on separating religion from government. Islam, as interpreted through Sharia, merges religious authority with political power and conflicts with secular pluralism. Within Sharia there is no recognized right to leave the faith, openly criticize religious doctrine, or practice another religion without consequence. In some Islamic jurisdictions,

blasphemy and apostasy laws can result in punishments ranging from fines and imprisonment to corporal punishment or death. Without freedom of religion and speech, freedom of the press and other civil liberties are also endangered.

Under the Fifth Amendment, Americans are guaranteed protections against self-incrimination and deprivation of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. Sharia courts operate differently from American courts, with religious leaders typically acting as judges while also being connected to the community and parties involved. This structure lacks the impartiality required under the Constitution and does not guarantee procedural rights for defendants.

Similar concerns are raised under the Sixth and Seventh Amendments, which guarantee impartial juries, public trials, legal counsel, and judgment by one's peers. Sharia courts derive authority from religious texts and interpretations by clerical leaders rather than from neutral civil law. Because rulings may depend on varying theological interpretations, there is insufficient legal consistency, transparency, and predictability compared to the American judicial system.

The Eighth Amendment prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. Traditional Islamic criminal penalties, known as hudud, include punishments such as amputations, lashings, and stoning for certain offenses. Quranic passages and historical Islamic jurisprudence actually prescribe these penalties. These are legal sanctions pretending to be religious doctrine. There is no question that such punishments are fundamentally incompatible with American constitutional standards and modern human rights protections.

The Tenth Amendment reserves governing powers to federal and state governments, not to independent religious authorities. No religious legal code can exercise judicial or legislative authority outside the constitutional framework. Allowing religious courts or legal systems to supersede constitutional law violates the structure of American government itself.

A successful American society depends on assimilation into a common civic culture, where individuals from many backgrounds unite under shared constitutional values. Any ideology discouraging assimilation or placing religious identity above national citizenship conflicts with the American social contract.

Islam presents itself as the sole true religion and has historically sought religious and political dominance over others, with practices such as the jizya tax imposed on non-Muslims in some Islamic states. We saw ISIS revive slavery, hostage-taking, and sexual exploitation, and justifying such practices in modern times through their interpretation of religious doctrine. Treatment of women is another major concern, with Quranic verses granting men authority over women, permitting polygamy, and allowing forms of physical discipline within marriage.

The United States is actively being confronted by Sharia, an ideological movement that rejects the core principals of a constitutional government, and instead promoting a system rooted in religious supremacy. Private religious devotion is not the issue. Americans will forever be free to worship however they choose. The issue is when a legal system, which erodes constitutional protections while hiding behind the vail of religion, attempts to be established.

Any movement that seeks to place itself above the constitution must be confronted directly and unapologetically. There can be no parallel legal system within the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Self". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "K".

Keith Self
Member of Congress