

Statements of Concern Made by Elected Officials and Political Candidates Regarding Park51
(As of September 3, 2010)

In response to the proposed construction of the Park51 Muslim Community Center in Lower Manhattan, various elected officials and political candidates on both sides of the aisle have made statements opposing its establishment or have called for it to be moved. Such statements send a clear message that the right to freedom of religion guaranteed by First Amendment is applied differently based upon one's faith and can fuel xenophobic sentiments and against community members.

Statements Made by Members of Congress

- U.S. Senator Harry Reid (D-Nevada), Senate Majority Leader, August 16, 2010:
"“The First Amendment protects freedom of religion,” said Jim Manley, a top adviser to Mr. Reid. “Senator Reid respects that but thinks that the mosque should be built someplace else.””¹
- U.S. Senator John McCain (R-Arizona), August 5, 2010:
The construction of Park51 “would harm relations, rather than help.”²
- U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman, (I-Connecticut), August 3, 2010:
“I wish somebody in New York would just put the brakes on for a while and take a look at this.”³
- U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson (R-Georgia), August 5, 2010:
Park51 “could be totally insensitive.”⁴
- U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), August 5, 2010:
The new building would be “insensitive to the families.”⁵
- U.S. Senator Jim Risch (R-Idaho), August 4, 2010:
“I completely sympathize with those who object to a mosque being built in that area.”⁶

¹ http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/17/us/politics/17mosque.html?_r=1&hp

² <http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/senators-isakson-snowe-mccain-ground-zero-mosque-%E2%80%98insensitive%E2%80%99>

³ <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/112323-lieberman-pause-to-development-of-islamic-center-near-ground-zero>

⁴ <http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/senators-isakson-snowe-mccain-ground-zero-mosque-%E2%80%98insensitive%E2%80%99>

⁵ <http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/senators-isakson-snowe-mccain-ground-zero-mosque-%E2%80%98insensitive%E2%80%99>

⁶ <http://www.idahoreporter.com/2010/risch-and-simpson-oppose-ground-zero-mosque-but-won%E2%80%99t-press-for-federal-action/>

- U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), August 5, 2010
“I do not believe the construction of this Islamic Center so near to Ground Zero is proper.”⁷
- U.S. Representative John Boehner (R-Ohio), House Minority Leader, August 14, 2010:
““The decision to build this mosque so close to Ground Zero is deeply troubling.”⁸
- U.S. Representative Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), August 4, 2010:
“I think building a mosque at Ground Zero is inappropriate and insensitive.”⁹
- U.S. Representative Peter King (R-New York), August 14, 2010:
“It is insensitive and uncaring for the Muslim community to build a mosque in the shadow of ground zero.”¹⁰
- U.S. Representative Roy Blunt, (R-Missouri), August 24, 2010:
“There are lots of things that the constitution allows you to do that you shouldn't do. You can say lots of things in our country, and a lot of them shouldn't be said. In fact, some big radio personality just had to cancel her, end her 20 year radio career because she said things that were constitutionally okay to say, but highly inappropriate, and the mosque is also just as inappropriate.”¹¹

Statements Made by State Governors

- Governor George Paterson (D-New York), August 18, 2010:
Moving the site of Park51 would be a “a magic moment in our history” and a “noble gesture.”¹²
- Governor Tim Pawlenty (R-Minnesota), August 6, 2010:
“I'm strongly opposed to the idea of putting a mosque anywhere near ground zero -- I think it's inappropriate.”¹³

Statements Made by State and Local Legislators

- State Senator Dean Skelos (R-New York), Minority Leader, August 19, 2010:
“One moment Nancy Pelosi talks about upholding freedom of religion, the next she says people who exercise their freedom of speech to protest construction of a Mosque

⁷ <http://www.idahoreporter.com/2010/minnick-and-crapo-too-oppose-ground-zero-mosque/>

⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/15/us/politics/15reaction.html>

⁹ <http://www.idahoreporter.com/2010/risch-and-simpson-oppose-ground-zero-mosque-but-won%E2%80%99t-press-for-federal-action/>

¹⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/15/us/politics/15reaction.html>

¹¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/08/25/blunt-dr-laura-mosque_n_694250.html

¹² http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/2010/08/19/2010-08-19_gov_new_spot_would_be_magic_moment_in_history.html

¹³ <http://www.startribune.com/politics/state/100164504.html?elr=KArksi8cyaiUo8cyaiUiD3aPc: Yyc:aUU>

near Ground Zero should be investigated. This issue is not about religious freedom, it's about what's right and what's wrong," Skelos said in the statement. "There is no need for an investigation —the Mosque is overwhelmingly opposed by the majority of people in the state, and throughout the country. Most importantly, it is opposed by the families and loved ones of those who lost their lives on 9/11."¹⁴

- State Assemblyman Sheldon Silver (D-New York), Speaker, August 24, 2010:
"I think the sponsors should take into very serious consideration the kind of turmoil that's been created and look to compromise."¹⁵
- State Assemblyman Richard Brodsky (D-New York), Candidate for State Attorney General, July 16, 2010:
"The mosque being built in that area is offensive to me."¹⁶
- Manhattan Community Board 1 Member Paul Sipos, May 13, 2010:
"If the Japanese decided to open a cultural center across from Pearl Harbor, that would be insensitive," Sipos told me. "If the Germans opened a Bach choral society across from Auschwitz, even after all these years, that would be an insensitive setting. I have absolutely nothing against Islam. I just think: Why there?"¹⁷

Statements Made by Political Candidates

- Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives Ilario Pantano (R-North Carolina), June 18, 2010:
"The suggestion that this mysteriously funded mosque is anything other than a permanent demonstration of Islam's march on the West is naïve at best. . . . This is about marking religious, ideological and territorial conquest. The Mosque is a martyr marker, and it must be stopped."¹⁸
- Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives George Demos (R-New York), July 21, 2010:
"Saudi Arabia, a nation that prohibits people from even wearing a Cross or the Star of David, now provokes the families of those who lost loved ones by apparently funneling money to build a mosque at the same location."¹⁹
- Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives Elliott Maynard (West Virginia), rpt August 16, 2010:
"Ground Zero is hallowed ground to Americans. Do you think the Muslims would allow a Jewish temple or Christian church to be built in Mecca?"²⁰

¹⁴ <http://www.nysenate.gov/press-release/statement-senate-republican-leader-dean-skelos-31>

¹⁵ http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/manhattan/sheldon_silver_created_turmoil_opposes_lbK7nUMUzgBVWEXRLa9E5I#ixzz0yPCncJI7

¹⁶ <http://www.observer.com/2010/politics/brodsky-ground-zero-mosque>

¹⁷ http://www.nypost.com/p/news/national/mosque_madness_at_ground_zero_OQ34EB0MWS0IXuAnQau5uL#ixzz0yPEemuvS

¹⁸ <http://dailycaller.com/2010/06/18/a-mosque-at-ground-zero/#ixzz0yPGVmC4e>

¹⁹ <http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/dailypolitics/2010/07/gop-hopeful-george-demos-rebut.html#ixzz0yPIBtCVM>

²⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/17/us/politics/17mosque.html>

- Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives James Renacci (R -Ohio), rpt August 16, 2010:
“It is very troubling to see President Obama again turning a deaf ear to the thoughts and concerns of a majority of Americans.”²¹
- Candidate for Governor of New York Rick Lazio (R), ongoing ad campaign:
“New Yorkers have been through enough. Now a terrorist-sympathizing imam wants to build a \$100 million mosque near ground zero. Where is this money coming from? Who is really behind it?”²²
- Candidate for Governor of New York Carl Paladino (R), July 22, 2010:
"As Governor I will use the power of eminent domain to stop this mosque and make the site a war memorial instead of a monument to those who attacked our country.”²³

²¹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/17/us/politics/17mosque.html>

²² <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/23/nyregion/23adboxlazio.html? r=1&ref=rick a lazio>

²³ <http://www.paladinoforthepeople.com/news2.php?id=38&t=1>