

ACLU AND NYCLU STATEMENT ON CONTROVERSY OVER NEW YORK CITY ISLAMIC CENTER

Adaptation of the article written by the ACLU

Religious freedom is one of America's most basic rights, yet even today, we must continue to fight back against religious discrimination and resist those who want to give away our most precious values for political advantage.

We are proud of our leaders who have stood up for religious freedom and defended the right of citizens to build a mosque and community center in lower Manhattan. These leaders understand that we must always — especially in times of controversy — uphold our core values, including a faith community's right to build a house of worship, whether a mosque, a church, or a synagogue. When we limit one group's freedom, everyone's liberty is at stake.

Throughout America's history, almost every religious group, including Jews, Protestants, Catholics, and Muslims, has been the target of discrimination. **Tolerance** and fairness have usually won, but only after just voices have overcome those of fear and hatred.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has defended the right of all religious groups— both majority and minority religions — to establish places of worship, and for Americans to pray, or not, as they choose.

Tolerance: acceptance, especially of opinions or behavior that you do not necessarily agree with.