

Richard Land spins the golden rule

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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Brian Beutler [highlights](#)

the irony that top Southern Baptist Convention lobbyist Richard Land is both a member of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and an outspoken opponent of Park51, aka Cordoba House, aka the “Ground Zero mosque.”

Beutler mostly lets Land do the talking—always a colorful event:

"I

think that interfaith cooperation is greatly enhanced by doing unto others as you would have them do unto you and that involves being sensitive to other people's feelings, and engaging in what my mother would call 'good manners,'" Land insisted. "For nine years now we've had a lot of calls for American people who are not Muslims to be sensitive to concerns of American Muslims and not in any way make them

feel like they're not wanted. I think that America has done a pretty good job of responding to that [and] I think now is the time for Muslim Americans to be sensitive to the concerns of their fellow Americans."

In

other words, following the golden rule, like taking public transit, benefits me most when other people do it so I don't have to. Another name for this might be "the opposite-of-golden rule." (Then there's the claim that Americans have treated American Muslims pretty well in recent years, which I won't get into here.)

Later Land switches from "Muslims should be sensitive" to an implied "Congress should do something about this":

One

of the wonderful things about America is if we don't like what our elected officials do, we can show our opposition [during the next election].

Perhaps he means we should unseat everyone who's been in Congress since 2000, the year in which both houses passed, by unanimous consent, [a law](#) prohibiting government from land use restrictions aimed at religious groups. There's an exception for cases of "compelling state interest," but political pressure definitely does not qualify as such an interest. In fact, this is a big part of the point of the law, as Don Byrd [pointed out](#) a while back.

Congress

has already spoken—unanimously!—so the Park51 controversy isn't a legislative issue. It shouldn't be a political one either.