



## Trump's Army secretary nominee hit with accusations of 'Islamophobia'

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President Trump's nominee for Army secretary faces charges of Islamophobia from a Muslim civil rights group that could complicate his Senate confirmation.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, which bills itself as the country's largest Muslim civil rights group, said this week that Tennessee state Sen. Mark Green should be rejected as the Army's top civilian for disparaging comments he made to a Tea Party group last year, including claims that public school students are being indoctrinated with Islam by textbooks.

Green a CEO and former Army special operations flight surgeon, has also drawn fire from gay and transgender rights groups for his September comments to the group.

"When you start teaching [students] the pillars of Islam and you start teaching how to pray as a Muslim, that is over the top and we will not tolerate that in this state," Green told the crowd.

Green could not be immediately reached through a spokesman on Saturday.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis vouched for Green's background and said he would support him through the confirmation process when the White House announced the nomination this month. The Senate could take up his confirmation hearings soon. Green would need a simple majority during a floor vote and Republicans control 52 of the chamber's 100 seats.

"Probably a party-line vote is the best he can hope for now," Benjamin Friedman, a research fellow at the Cato Institute, wrote in an email to the *Washington Examiner*.

The Tea Party discussion also touched on the birther conspiracy around former President Obama, Friedman said. When asked by an audience member whether Obama is a Muslim, Green said "I can't answer that question" despite the theory being widely discredited.

"Combine birtherism, anti-Muslim statements and problematic views on gays, and you get real problems, maybe even with Republicans," Friedman wrote. "I'd say there's a decent chance he's not confirmed."

During an open-mic question and answer session, Green said he agreed with an audience member that Islamic indoctrination of public school students in Tennessee is "alive and well."

Green, who said his father was a Baptist preacher, raised concerns about a textbook that taught "how to pray like a Muslim" and said students should be taught history such as when "Constantinople fell to the Muslim horde or whatever you want to call it."

"They should also teach that in Islam it's different because they actually ... marry their religion and political faith together," he said.

Two groups, the American Military Partner Association and the Human Rights Campaign, have urged the Senate to reject Green over his Tea Party comments they say are evidence he is opposed to transgender and gay rights.

Green said last year that most psychiatrists believe transgenderism is a disease and that he would support the Tennessee governor in opposing the nationwide legalization of gay marriage.

"We're not going to issue marriage licenses to gay people because our state voted differently," he said "OK, Supreme Court you said it and I don't care. I'll back you up."

He also compared infanticide of children with Down syndrome to what the public thought 30 years ago about "two guys getting married."

"At what point do you just say I drew this line in the sand and no," Green told the audience.