

The New York Times

The Opinion Pages

The Design of the Islamic Center Near Ground Zero

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To the Editor:

I was hoping that the architects of the controversial mosque and Islamic community center near ground zero would submit a respectful design for the proposed mosque, out of respect to millions who oppose it, and the thousands who were directly affected by the 9/11 attacks.

Today, I saw a rendering of the proposed mosque, and now I oppose the construction of it twice as much as I did yesterday. The facade of the entire 12-story mosque looks like a shattered sidewalk with cracks running in every direction, forming shapes like the Star of David. Is there a mosque in the Middle East or anywhere else in the world that looks like this? I was expecting something far more tasteful, and far less eccentric and mysterious.

To me, the proposed mosque looks like the twin towers as they crumbled to the ground.

John C. Wolfe

Chestertown, N.Y., Oct. 3, 2010

The writer is former chief speechwriter to Gov. George E. Pataki of New York and was with the governor at ground zero on 9/11.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Governor George E. Pataki

Since the theme of your Jan. 9 editorial was “What wasn’t in the Governor’s Speech,” allow me to point out what wasn’t in your editorial.

You imply that the Governor’s income tax cuts have shifted the tax burden back to local taxpayers. What’s missing from your editorial is the proof, which isn’t surprising because there isn’t any. During the past decade, property taxes in New York rose every year by almost ten-percent. In 1995, they rose by less than the rate of inflation (2.7-percent). Early data suggests that the same will be true in 1996.

Surprisingly, you fault the Governor for not using the State of the State Address to discuss, of all things, the Wicks Law. Not surprisingly, you forgot to mention that both the Governor and the Senate proposed legislation to reform that law last year, and it died in the Assembly.

By focusing on issues that weren’t in the speech, you failed to offer any meaningful insight into the multitude of things that were. For example, does the editorial support the Bias Crime legislation the Governor proposed? If so, why didn’t you write about it?

Where does the editorial board stand on the two pieces of legislation the Governor proposed to protect women from domestic violence? How about the Police and Public Protection Act? The Mastectomy Bill? The Built On Pride Program? Life sentences for those convicted twice of sexual assault against children? Reducing the property tax burden on the elderly?

You declined comment on all of these issues, then hypocritically concluded your editorial by writing that the Governor failed to provide “even a peep of new thinking about what New York is or what it ought to be.” The authors of that criticism should have reserved it for themselves.