

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 285

BY REPRESENTATIVE AMEDEE

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS: Requests that the president and congress urge discriminatory countries to cease religious persecution and the heads of governments of all countries to uphold the right to religious freedom

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the President and Congress of the United States of America to urge
3 discriminatory countries to cease religious persecution and combat religious
4 persecution carried out by extremist, non-state actors and to urge heads of the
5 governments of all countries around the world to uphold the right to religious
6 freedom and condemn the global persecution of any religious group.

7 WHEREAS, the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et
8 seq.) finds that religious persecution is not confined to a particular region or regime and
9 reaffirms the commitment of the United States that religious freedom is the right of every
10 individual and should never be arbitrarily abridged by any government; and

11 WHEREAS, the persecution of Christians and members of other religions is a global
12 problem, occurring in countries across Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the
13 Americas; such persecution ranges from social harassment and discrimination to physical
14 violence, imprisonment, torture, enslavement, rape, death, and genocide; and

15 WHEREAS, thousands of Christians and members of other religions are held as
16 prisoners around the world, merely for believing and worshiping according to their faith; and

17 WHEREAS, 2018 reports from international nongovernmental organizations state
18 that 215 million Christians experience high levels of persecution, amounting to one in twelve
19 Christians worldwide, and that in the most recent twelve-month reporting period, 3,066

1 Christians were killed, 1,252 were abducted, 1,020 were raped or sexually harassed, and 793
2 churches were attacked; and

3 WHEREAS, the Middle East has been a home to Christians since the first century
4 A.D., but the Christian population in the Middle East has significantly decreased over the
5 past few decades as a result of persecution, displacement, and genocide; and

6 WHEREAS, Christians and members of other religions in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere
7 have faced assault, torture, imprisonment, enslavement, and execution in a genocidal
8 campaign by the Islamic State and other religious extremists who have destroyed Christian
9 and other religious holy sites in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere; in 2016, approximately two
10 hundred Christians in Iran were arrested, while others have been beaten, tortured, subjected
11 to feigned public executions, and even sentenced to death for their faith, and at least ninety
12 remain in illegal detention; and

13 WHEREAS, there is widespread violence among Muslims in the Middle East, most
14 commonly along the Shia-Sunni divide; and

15 WHEREAS, Communist regimes have a strong history of oppressing and persecuting
16 Christians as well as members of other religions; and

17 WHEREAS, in China, members of Christian churches, as well as members of other
18 religions, who are not registered with the government face increased persecution from the
19 Chinese state, including the risk of imprisonment and torture, and Communist officials are
20 confiscating church belongings and burning them along with murdering priests who continue
21 to preach the Gospel; and

22 WHEREAS, in North Korea, the practice of Christianity is prohibited, and if caught,
23 Christians are sent to forced labor camps; and

24 WHEREAS, in Mexico, Nicaragua, and Colombia, Christian church leaders have
25 been assaulted, threatened, and in some cases killed by transnational criminal organizations
26 and paramilitary armed groups attempting to intimidate and silence them; Mexico is
27 reportedly the most dangerous place in the world to be a priest, with at least six priests killed
28 in 2018 and twenty-two priests killed in the past three years due to increased secularism,
29 organized crime, and lawlessness; and

1 WHEREAS, religious discrimination is a global human rights problem, and the right
2 to religious freedom is a universal right recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human
3 Rights.

4 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
5 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the President of the United States of
6 America and the Congress of the United States of America to urge discriminatory countries
7 to cease religious persecution and combat religious persecution carried out by extremist
8 non-state actors and to urge the heads of the governments of all countries around the world
9 to uphold the right to religious freedom and condemn the global persecution of any religious
10 group.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature
12 of Louisiana does hereby condemn all violations of religious freedom and the religious
13 persecution of Christians around the world and does hereby affirm that religious freedom is
14 a fundamental right of every individual that should never be arbitrarily abridged by any
15 government.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
17 President of the United States of America and each member of Louisiana's congressional
18 delegation.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HR 285 Original

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Requests that the U.S. president and congress urge (1) discriminatory countries to cease religious persecution and combat religious persecution carried out by extremist non-state actors and (2) the heads of the governments of all countries around the world to uphold the right to religious freedom and condemn the global persecution of any religious group. Condemns all violations of religious freedom and religious persecution of Christians around the world and affirms that religious freedom is a fundamental right of every individual that should never be arbitrarily abridged by any government.