106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 253

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress strongly objecting to any effort to expel the Holy See from the United Nations as a state participant by removing its status as a Permanent Observer.

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Whereas the Holy See is the governing authority of the sovereign state of Vatican City;

Whereas the Holy See has an internationally recognized legal personality that allows it to enter into treaties as the juridical equal of a state and to send and receive diplomatic representatives;

Whereas the diplomatic history of the Holy See began over 1,600 years ago, during the 4th century A.D., and the Holy See currently has formal diplomatic relations with 169 nations, including the United States, and maintains 179 permanent diplomatic missions abroad;

Whereas, although the Holy See was an active participant in a wide range of United Nations activities since 1946 and was eligible to become a member state of the United Nations, it chose instead to become a nonmember state with Permanent Observer status over 35 years ago, in 1964;

Whereas, unlike the governments of other geographically small countries such as Monaco, Nauru, San Marino, and Liechtenstein, the Holy See does not possess a vote in the General Assembly of the United Nations;

Whereas, according to a July 1998 assessment by the United States Department of State, ''[t]he United States values the Holy See's significant contributions to international peace and human rights'';

Whereas during the past year certain organizations that oppose the views of the Holy See regarding the sanctity of human life and the value of the family as the basic unit of society have initiated an organized effort to pressure the United Nations to remove the Permanent Observer status of the Holy See; and

Whereas the removal of the Holy See's Permanent Observer status would constitute an expulsion of the Holy See from the United Nations as a state participant: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That the Congress—

(1) commends the Holy See for its strong commitment to fundamental human rights, including the protection of innocent human life both before and after birth, during its 36 years as a Permanent Observer at the United Nations;

(2) strongly objects to any effort to expel the Holy See from the United Nations as a state participant by removing its status as a nonmember state Permanent Observer;

(3) believes that any degradation of the status accorded to the Holy See at the United Nations would seriously damage the credibility of the United Nations by demonstrating that its rules of participation are manipulable for ideological reasons rather than being rooted in neutral principles and objective facts of sovereignty; and

(4) expresses the concern that any such degradation of the status accorded to the Holy See would seriously damage relations between the United Nations and member states that find in the Holy See a moral and ethical presence with which they

can work effectively in pursuing humanitarian approaches to international problems.

Passed the House of Representatives July 11, 2000.

Attest:

Clerk.