In summary, the Administration strongly supports the objectives of eliminating religious persecution, but we do not believe that the bill in its current form can accomplish this goal. In fact, we believe that the current draft would frustrate these other objectives, and, for this reason, we oppose the legislation in its current form.

In particular, we fear that the legislation: is a blunt instrument that is more likely to harm, rather than aid, victims of religious persecution; runs the risk of harming vital bilateral relations with key allies and regional powers, and undercutting U.S. Government efforts to promote the very regional peace and reconciliation that can foster religious tolerance and understanding from Europe to the Middle East to South Asia; creates a confusing bureaucratic structure for dealing with religious persecution at the very time the Department of State is consolidating its authority and expanding its effectiveness on these issues; and establishes a de facto hierarchy of human rights violations that would severely damage U.S. efforts—long supported by the religious community—by ensuring that all aspects of civil and political rights are protected.

Before I detail these and other serious concerns, let me again emphasize our willingness to work with any legislation that would produce serious responses—legislative and otherwise—to religious persecution, wherever it occurs.

In particular, we are committed to strengthening and improving our new structures for addressing religious freedom and persecution, and to working with our foreign policy counterparts to prepare for serious discussions with the Committee about ways to reinforce these structures, including by the development of legislation to further enhance our efforts to promote religious freedom, such as by further increasing the visibility of this issue in the U.S. Government, undertaking official fact-finding and monitoring missions, and dedicating additional agency personnel to address religious persecution and complement the efforts of the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad and the Foreign Policy Personnel to address religious persecution.

We are treating religious liberty as a foreign policy priority and we seek to respond to the call for action by Americans of every faith and belief.

With that important background, let me now turn to the "Freedom From Religious Persecution Act of 1997."
of U.S. foreign and domestic policy interests that do not rise to the level of a direct threat to our national security (e.g., regional peacekeeping and stability, environmental protection, etc.), and which have been security-related (as per policy in the past, on occasion). Under the bill, in addition, a presidential waiver would not take effect for forty-five days, absent emergency conditions. Furthermore, according to the President, such limited discretion in the area of foreign affairs is contrary to the national interest and is not a subject to be subject to Senate confirmation, would duplicate existing State Department functions including, promoting religious freedom. The Secretary of State is best suited to report and advise the President on religious persecution abroad. The State Department’s reporting channels and annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices are the most accurate, cost-effective and appropriate method for the U.S. Government to obtain and report information on religious persecution. Determinations on religious persecution would remain matters of foreign policy, including those regarding sanctions, should be made by the President with the assistance of the Secretary of State and other relevant agencies. The Director of the State Department’s Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring would be subject to Senate confirmation.

To others fleeing persecution. Let me be clear: we support procedural protections for all applicants at ports of entry. In fact, before passage of last year’s immigration bill, we urged that expedited procedures apply only in exceptional, emergency-like circumstances, but Congress determined that such procedures should be applied more broadly. While we are prepared to readress this issue in the future, responsible Members can appreciate our desire to do so with respect to all classes of applicants. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned that changes the bill would make to our ability to make an informed decision (where claims made by those already in the country) would recreate unnecessary burdens and inefficiencies that made asylum vulnerable to abuse in the past. We fear that such changes would hurt all legitimate asylum seekers, including those making claims based on religious persecution.

Fourth, the bill would create a new and unnecessary bureaucracy which would duplicate, and possibly undercut, the functions of the Special Envoy for Religious Freedom. The Senate-created Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring within the Executive Office of the President. Creating the position of Director of the Special Envoy’s Office should be subject to Senate confirmation, would duplicate existing State Department functions including, promoting religious freedom. The Secretary of State is best suited to report and advise the President on religious persecution abroad. The State Department’s reporting channels and annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices are the most accurate, cost-effective and appropriate method for the U.S. Government to obtain and report information on religious persecution. Determinations on religious persecution would remain matters of foreign policy, including those regarding sanctions, should be made by the President with the assistance of the Secretary of State and other relevant agencies. The Director of the State Department’s Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring would be subject to Senate confirmation.

Eighth, while we welcome and share the President’s concern about fairness in asylum adjudications, including through the WTO agreement and under other trade laws. The bill poses a similar risk with respect to international obligations contained in the Articles of Agreement of most international financial institutions in which the U.S. participates.

Eighth, while we welcome and share the President’s concern about fairness in asylum adjudications, including through the WTO agreement and under other trade laws. The bill poses a similar risk with respect to international obligations contained in the Articles of Agreement of most international financial institutions in which the U.S. participates.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, the National Youth Sports Program is a cost-effective partnership between public and private sectors, bringing together the efforts of America’s State and local governments, the sports community, and the private sector, to provide opportunities for all youth to participate in sports and fitness programs. The National Youth Sports Program is a cost-effective partnership between public and private sectors, bringing together the efforts of America’s State and local governments, the sports community, and the private sector, to provide opportunities for all youth to participate in sports and fitness programs.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, the National Youth Sports Program at Adams State College in Alamosa, CO, recently entered its 22d year of existence. This program has proven to be a valuable and meaningful outlet for those youths who would not otherwise have access to the activities and instruction the program offers.

The NYSP is a cost-effective partnership program between the NCAA and selected institutions of higher learning, such as Adams State and is designed to benefit the youth of America.

Adams State is one of two colleges in Colorado participating in the program which combines sports instruction with meaningful educational activities for girls and boys ages 10 to 16.

Enrollment in the program and the physicals and services are free and open to all young people in the area whose parents or guardians meet the income guidelines provided by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Larry Zaragoza, the activity director for NYSP at Adams State, is stepping down after heading the program at Adams State College for the past 13 years and being involved in the program for all of its 22 years that is has been held at Adams State. He will certainly be missed.

MOTHER MEETS RECIPIENT OF SON’S HEART

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 1997

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, a heart transplant is but one example of medical progress. But miraculous is it when 71-year-old Bill Ellis is alive and well today with the transplanted heart of then-10-year-old Travis Robinson of Salt Lake City, Utah. This remarkable story is well told in an article published April 24, 1996 in the Salt Lake City Tribune.

I take this opportunity to share this great story with my colleagues:

From the Salt Lake Tribune, April 24, 1996

MOM IS HAPPY SON’S LITTLE HEART WENT TO SUCH A BIG-HEARTED MAN—MOTHER MEETS RECIPIENT OF SON’S HEART

(By Norma Wagner)

After losing her 10-year-old son Travis to a traffic accident in September, Tracy Robinson was not sure she ever would want to meet the patient who received the fifth-grader’s heart.

“My heart goes on,” said Robison, an emergency-room nurse in Provo who was working when her son was brought into the hospital.

But through a series of unusual circumstances, 71-year-old Bill Ellis had come from a young boy in Orem, Barnett knew it had to be Travis.

After all, Barnett’s granddaughter was one of a national snack company in Chicago, found out it was Travis’ donated heart that saved his life.

Ellis had an old friend in Utah, Gordon “Boots” Barnett, whom he had not seen in 38 years. The two recently got in touch again, and when Ellis—who suffered from terminal heart disease—told Barnett his new heart had come from a young boy in Orem, Barnett knew it had to be Travis.

As for Ellis, who has become a major supporter of shelters for abused women and children in Alabama and Los Angeles, he has not only found new meaning in life, but “another family” in Salt Lake City.

“I have a picture of Travis and his mother and two brothers right here in my office,” Ellis said. “I have a picture of Travis and his mother and two brothers right here in my office.”