

full advantage of this trade, we must be clear in these sorts of uncertainties in the law.

This bill, by ending the authorization's sunset, will afford the bridge greater opportunities to pursue and finance projects that will enhance and expand the capacity of the bridge and supporting facilities and further improve trade between the United States and Mexico.

I would like to thank Senator CORNYN for working with me on this legislation and for taking that lead and, as I said a few minutes ago, Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their support as well as their staffs.

I also would like to thank local leaders, Starr County Judge Eloy Vera and State Representative Ryan Guillen, for their support of this legislation.

I ask my colleagues to support this important bill.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, in closing, again I want to emphasize that Mexico is a vital partner to the United States in terms of trade, security, and a wide range of regional concerns. We need to keep all the channels between our countries flowing, and that includes the physical connections between the U.S. and Mexico.

This bill would help strengthen an important bridge between our countries and, at the same time, signal just how important we consider this friendship. I support this measure, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR).

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to thank Representative CUELLAR for his steadfast leadership to ensure the House's consideration of this legislation and that we move forward on this.

I thought I would also point out that this bill comes at no cost to the taxpayer. What it does instead is incentivizes the private sector to invest and maintain this important commercial border crossing. That is the point here.

While the actual end date for the bridge's authority is still some years away, the lack of that permanent authority has already begun to constrain the financing of long-term improvements that will help make the crossing more efficient and secure.

So I thank Mr. CUELLAR again and, also, Mr. CASTRO and Mr. POE, both members of the committee who have also been strong supporters.

I thank Mr. ENGEL for helping to ensure that our border infrastructure is maintained and modernized to keep pace with the growing legitimate commercial activity across our southern border.

I encourage my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2143.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FRANK R. WOLF INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1150) to amend the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to improve the ability of the United States to advance religious freedom globally through enhanced diplomacy, training, counterterrorism, and foreign assistance efforts, and through stronger and more flexible political responses to religious freedom violations and violent extremism worldwide, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1150

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.

Sec. 2. Findings; Policy.

Sec. 3. Definitions.

TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF STATE ACTIVITIES

Sec. 101. Office on International Religious Freedom; Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.

Sec. 102. Annual Report on International Religious Freedom.

Sec. 103. Training for Foreign Service officers; report.

Sec. 104. Prisoner lists and issue briefs on religious freedom concerns.

TITLE II—NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
Sec. 201. Special Adviser for International Religious Freedom.

TITLE III—PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

Sec. 301. Non-state actor designations.

Sec. 302. Presidential actions in response to particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

Sec. 303. Report to Congress.

Sec. 304. Presidential waiver.

Sec. 305. Publication in the Federal Register.

TITLE IV—PROMOTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Sec. 401. Assistance for promoting religious freedom.

TITLE V—DESIGNATED PERSONS LIST FOR PARTICULARLY SEVERE VIOLATIONS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Sec. 501. Designated Persons List for Particularly Severe Violations of Religious Freedom.

TITLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 601. Miscellaneous provisions.

Sec. 602. Clerical amendments.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; POLICY.

(a) FINDINGS.—Section 2(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by inserting immediately prior to the penultimate sentence the following new sentence: “The freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is understood to protect theistic and non-theistic beliefs as well as the right not to profess or practice any religion.”; and

(2) in paragraph (6)—

(A) by inserting “and the specific targeting of non-theists, humanists, and atheists because of their beliefs” after “religious persecution”; and

(B) by inserting “and in regions where non-state actors exercise significant political power and influence” after “religious majorities”.

(b) POLICY.—Section 2(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(6) Because the promotion of international religious freedom protects human rights, advances democracy abroad, and advances United States interests in stability, security, and development globally, the promotion of international religious freedom requires new and evolving policies, and diplomatic responses that are drawn from the expertise of the national security agencies, the diplomatic services, and other governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations, and are coordinated across and carried out by the entire range of Federal agencies.”.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

Section 3 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6402) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (13)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by redesignating clauses (iv) and (v) as clauses (v) and (vi), respectively; and

(ii) by inserting after clause (iii) the following:

“(iv) not professing a particular religion, or any religion;” and

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) by inserting “conscience, non-theistic views, or” before “religious belief or practice”; and

(ii) by inserting after “forced religious conversion” the following: “, forcibly compelling non-believers or non-theists to recant their beliefs or to convert”; and

(2) by adding at the end, the following new paragraphs:

“(14) SPECIAL WATCH LIST.—The term ‘Special Watch List’ means the Special Watch List as contained in the Executive Summary to the Annual Report and described in section 102(b)(1)(F)(iii).

“(15) NON-STATE ACTOR.—The term ‘non-state actor’ means a nonsovereign entity that exercises significant political power and is able to exert influence at a national or international level but does not belong to or ally itself to any particular country and often employs illegal violence in pursuit of its objectives.

“(16) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the meaning given that term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)”.

TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF STATE ACTIVITIES

SEC. 101. OFFICE ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM; AMBASSADOR AT LARGE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 101 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6411) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end before the period the following: “, and shall report directly to the Secretary of State”;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—
 (i) by striking “responsibility” and inserting “responsibilities”;

(ii) by striking “shall be to advance” and inserting the following: “shall be to—

“(A) advance”;

(iii) in subparagraph (A) (as so added), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”;

(iv) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(B) integrate United States international religious freedom policies and strategies into the foreign policy efforts of the United States.”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting “the principal adviser to” before “the Secretary of State”;

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking “and” at the end;

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”;

(iii) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) contacts with nongovernmental organizations that have an impact on the state of religious freedom in their respective societies or regions, or internationally.”;

(D) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (5); and

(E) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph:

“(4) COORDINATION RESPONSIBILITIES.—In order to promote religious freedom as an interest of United States foreign policy, the Ambassador at Large—

“(A) shall coordinate international religious freedom policies across all programs, projects, and activities of the United States; and

“(B) should participate in any interagency processes on issues in which the promotion of international religious freedom policy can advance United States national security interests, including in democracy promotion, stability, security, and development globally.”; and

(3) in subsection (d), by striking “staff for the Office” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “individuals to fill at least 25 full-time equivalent staff positions, and any other temporary staff positions as needed to compile, edit, and manage the Annual Report under the direct supervision of the Ambassador at Large, and for the conduct of investigations by the Office and for necessary travel to carry out the provisions of this Act. The Secretary of State should also provide to the Ambassador at Large funds that are sufficient to carry out the duties described in this section, including as necessary representation funds, in amounts comparable to those provided to other Ambassadors at Large in the Department of State.”.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—Because international religious freedom is a vital foreign policy interest and one that needs coordination across many regional bureaus and among Special Envoys and Special Representatives with overlapping mandates, the Secretary of State should consider elevating the office of International Religious Freedom and the position of the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom to the Office of the Secretary, similar to other Ambassador-at-Large positions that now report directly to the Secretary. Providing the Office of International Religious Freedom with additional resources and status will demonstrate both the strategic importance of international religious freedom policy within the State Department bureaucracy and show persecuted religious groups globally that the U.S. gives priority to the protection and promotion of international

religious freedom as mandated by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

SEC. 102. ANNUAL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 102(b)(1) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6412(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “September 1” and inserting “May 1”;

(2) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by redesignating clause (iv) as clause (vii); and

(B) by inserting after clause (iii) the following new clauses:

“(iv) particularly severe violations of religious freedom in that country in the case of a foreign country with respect to which a government does not exist or the government does not control its territory;

“(v) an identification of prisoners in that country pursuant to section 108;

“(vi) any action taken by the government of that country to censor religious content, communications, or worship activities online, including descriptions of the targeted religious group, the content, communication, or activities censored, and the means used.”;

(3) in subparagraph (B), in the matter preceding clause (i)—

(A) by inserting “persecution of lawyers, politicians, or other human rights advocates seeking to defend the rights of members of religious groups or highlight religious freedom violations, prohibitions on ritual animal slaughter or male infant circumcision,” after “entire religions.”; and

(B) by inserting “policies that ban or restrict the public manifestation of religious belief and the peaceful involvement of religious groups or their members in the political life of each such foreign country,” after “such groups.”;

(4) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) by striking “A description” and inserting “A comprehensive description”;

(B) by striking “policies in support” and inserting “diplomatic and political coordination efforts, and other policies in support”; and

(C) by adding at the end before the period the following: “, and a comprehensive and country-specific analysis of the impact of actions by the United States on the status of religious freedom in each such country”; and

(5) in subparagraph (F)—

(A) in clause (i)—

(i) by striking “section 402(b)(1)” and inserting “section 402(b)(1)(B)(i)”;

(ii) by adding at the end the following: “Any country in which a non-state actor designated as an entity of particular concern for religious freedom under section 301 of the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act is located shall be included in this section of the report.”

(B) by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(iii) SPECIAL WATCH LIST.—A list, to be known as the ‘Special Watch List’, which shall identify each country that engages in or tolerates severe violations of religious freedom during the previous year but which the President determines does not meet, at the time of the publication of the Annual Report, all of the criteria described in section 3(1) for designation under section 402(b)(1).”

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the original intent of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.) was to require annual reports from both the Department of State and the Commission on International Religious Freedom to be delivered each year, during the same calendar year, and with at least 5 months separating these reports, in order to provide

updated information for policy-makers, Members of Congress, and nongovernmental organizations; and

(2) given that the annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices no longer contain updated information on religious freedom conditions globally, it is important that the Department of State and the Commission work together to fulfill the original intent of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

SEC. 103. TRAINING FOR FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS; REPORT.

(a) AMENDMENT TO FOREIGN SERVICE ACT OF 1980.—Section 708 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4028) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively;

(2) in subsection (d), as redesignated, by striking “The Secretary of State” and inserting “REFUGEES.—The Secretary of State”;

(3) in subsection (e), as redesignated, by striking “The Secretary of State” and inserting “CHILD SOLDIERS.—The Secretary of State”;

(4) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

“(a) DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall develop a curriculum for training United States Foreign Service officers in the scope and strategic value of international religious freedom, how violations of international religious freedom harm fundamental United States interests, how the advancement of international religious freedom can advance such interests, how United States international religious freedom policy should be carried out in practice by United States diplomats and other Foreign Service officers, and the relevance and relationship of international religious freedom to United States defense, diplomacy, development, and public affairs efforts. The Secretary of State shall ensure the availability of sufficient resources to develop and implement such curriculum.

“(2) ROLE OF OTHER OFFICIALS.—The Secretary of State shall carry out paragraph (1)—

“(A) with the assistance of the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom appointed under section 101(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998;

“(B) in coordination with the Director of the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center and other Federal officials as appropriate; and

“(C) in consultation with the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom established in section 201(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 and other relevant stakeholders.

“(b) TRAINING PROGRAM.—Not later than the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, the Director of the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center shall begin mandatory training on religious freedom for all Foreign Service officers, including all entry level officers, all officers prior to departure for posting outside the United States, and all outgoing deputy chiefs of mission and ambassadors. Such training shall, at minimum, be a separate, independent, and required segment of each of the following:

“(1) The A-100 course attended by all Foreign Service officers.

“(2) The courses required of every Foreign Service officer prior to a posting outside the United States, with segments tailored to the particular religious demography, religious freedom conditions, and United States strategies for advancing religious freedom, in each receiving country.

“(3) The courses required of all outgoing deputy chiefs of mission and ambassadors.

“(c) INFORMATION SHARING.—The curriculum and training materials developed pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) should be made available to all other Federal agencies.”.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, with the assistance of the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, and the Director of the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report containing a comprehensive plan for undertaking training for Foreign Service officers as required under section 708 of the Foreign Services Act of 1980, as amended by subsection (a) of this section.

SEC. 104. PRISONER LISTS AND ISSUE BRIEFS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CONCERNS.

Section 108 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6417) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by striking “faith” and inserting “activities, religious freedom advocacy, or efforts to protect and advance the universally-recognized right to the freedom of religion.”;

(2) in subsection (c), by striking “, as appropriate, provide” and insert “make available”;

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) VICTIMS LIST MAINTAINED BY THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall make publicly available online and in official publications lists of persons it determines are imprisoned, detained, disappeared, placed under house arrest, tortured, or subject to forced renunciations of faith for their religious activity or religious freedom advocacy by the government of a foreign country that the Commission recommends for designation as a country of particular concern for religious freedom under section 402(b)(1) or by a non-state actor that the Commission recommends for designation as an entity of particular concern for religious freedom under section 301 of the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act and include as much publicly-available information as possible on the conditions and circumstances of such persons.

“(2) DISCRETION.—In compiling such lists, the Commission shall exercise all appropriate discretion, including consideration of the safety and security of, and benefit to, the persons who may be included on the lists and the families of such persons.”.

TITLE II—NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SEC. 201. SPECIAL ADVISER FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

Section 101 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3021) is amended by striking subsection (k) and inserting the following:

“(k) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that there should be within the staff of the National Security Council a Special Adviser to the President on International Religious Freedom, whose position should be comparable to that of a director within the Executive Office of the President, with the primary responsibility to serve as a resource for executive branch officials on international religious freedom, compiling and maintaining information on the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom (as defined in section 3 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998), and making relevant policy recommendations to advance United States international reli-

gious freedom policy. The Special Advisor should also assist the Ambassador-at-Large to coordinate international religious freedom policies and strategies throughout the executive branch and within any interagency policy committees where the Ambassador-at-Large participates.”.

TITLE III—PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS SEC. 301. NON-STATE ACTOR DESIGNATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall, concurrent with the annual foreign country review required by section 402(b)(1) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6442(b)(1))—

(1) review and identify any non-state actors operating in any such reviewed country or surrounding region that have engaged in particularly severe violations of religious freedom; and

(2) designate, in a manner consistent with such Act, each such non-state actor as an entity of particular concern for religious freedom.

(b) REPORT.—Whenever the President designates a non-state actor under subsection (a) as an entity of particular concern for religious freedom, the President shall, as soon as practicable after the designation is made, submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report detailing the reasons for such designation.

(c) ACTIONS.—The President should take specific actions to address severe violations of religious freedom of non-state actors that are designated under subsection (a), including taking actions commensurate to those actions described in section 405 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6445).

(d) DEPARTMENT OF STATE ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary of State should include information detailing the reasons the President designated a non-state actor as an entity of particular concern for religious freedom under subsection (a) in the Annual Report required in section 102(b)(1) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6442(b)(1)).

(e) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State should work with Congress to create new political, financial, and diplomatic tools to address severe violations of religious freedom by non-state actors and to update the actions the President can take in section 405 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

(f) DETERMINATIONS OF RESPONSIBLE PARTIES.—In order to appropriately target Presidential actions under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 in response, the President shall with respect to each non-state actor designated as an entity of particular concern for religious freedom under subsection (a), seek to determine the specific officials or members thereof that are responsible for the particularly severe violations of religious freedom engaged in or tolerated by that entity.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms “appropriate congressional committees”, “non-state actor”, and “particularly severe violations of religious freedom” have the meanings given such terms in section 3 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6402), as amended by section 3 of this Act.

SEC. 302. PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO PARTICULARLY SEVERE VIOLATIONS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

Section 402 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6442) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which each Annual Report

is submitted under section 102(b), the President shall—

“(i) review the status of religious freedom in each foreign country to determine whether the government of that country has engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom in each such country during the preceding 12 months or longer; and

“(ii) designate each country the government of which has engaged in or tolerated violations described in clause (i) as a country of particular concern for religious freedom.”; and

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking “September 1 of the respective year” and inserting “the date on which each Annual Report is submitted under section 102(b)”;

(B) by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

“(3) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Whenever the President designates a country as a country of particular concern for religious freedom under paragraph (1)(A), the President shall, not later than 90 days after the designation is made, transmit to the appropriate congressional committees—

“(i) the designation of the country, signed by the President;

“(ii) the identification, if any, of responsible parties determined under paragraph (2); and

“(iii) a description of the actions taken under subsection (c), the purposes of the actions taken, and the effectiveness of the actions taken.

“(B) REMOVAL OF DESIGNATION.—A country that is designated as a country of particular concern for religious freedom under paragraph (1)(A) shall retain such designation until the President determines and reports to the appropriate congressional committees that the country should no longer be so designated.”; and

(C) by adding at the end, the following new paragraph:

“(4) TREATMENT OF COUNTRIES ON SPECIAL WATCH LIST.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The President shall designate as a country of particular concern for religious freedom under paragraph (1)(A) any country that appears on the Special Watch List in more than 2 consecutive Annual Reports.

“(B) EXERCISE OF WAIVER AUTHORITY.—The President may waive the application of subparagraph (A) with respect to a country for up to 2 years if the President certifies to the appropriate committees of Congress that—

“(i) the country has entered into an agreement with the United States to carry out specific and credible actions to improve religious freedom conditions and end religious freedom violations;

“(ii) the country has entered into an agreement with the United Nations, the European Union, or other ally of the United States, to carry out specific and credible actions to improve religious freedom conditions and end religious freedom violations; or

“(iii) the waiver is in the national security interests of the United States.

“(C) EFFECT ON DESIGNATION AS COUNTRY OF PARTICULAR CONCERN.—The presence or absence of a country from the Special Watch List in any given year shall not preclude the designation of such country as a country of particular concern for religious freedom under paragraph (1)(A) in any such year.”; and

(2) in subsection (c)(5), in the second sentence, by inserting “and include a description of the impact of the designation of such sanction or sanctions that exist in each country” after “determines satisfy the requirements of this subsection”.

SEC. 303. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

Section 404(a)(4)(A) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6444(a)(4)(A)) is amended—

(1) in clause (iii), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(iv) the impact on the advancement of United States interests in democracy, human rights, and security, and a description of policy tools being applied in the country, including programs that target democratic stability, economic growth, and counter-terrorism.”.

SEC. 304. PRESIDENTIAL WAIVER.

Section 407 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6447) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “subsection (b)” and inserting “subsection (c)”; and

(B) by inserting “, for a single 180-day period,” after “may waive”;

(2) by striking “that—” and all that follows and inserting “that the exercise of such waiver authority would further the purposes of this Act.”;

(3) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c);

(4) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

“(b) **ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY.**—Subject to subsection (c), the President may waive, for any additional period of time after the 180-day period described in subsection (a), the application of any of the actions described in paragraphs (9) through (15) of section 405(a) (or a commensurate action in substitution thereto) with respect to a country, if the President determines and so reports to the appropriate congressional committees that—

“(1) the respective foreign government has ceased the violations giving rise to the Presidential action; or

“(2) the exercise of such authority is important to the national interests of the United States.”.

(5) in subsection (c), by inserting “or (b)” after “subsection (a)”; and

(6) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that—

“(1) ongoing and persistent waivers of the application of any of the actions described in paragraphs (9) through (15) of section 405(a) (or commensurate action in substitution thereto) with respect to a country do not fulfill the purposes of this Act; and

“(2) because the promotion of religious freedom is a compelling interest of United States foreign policy, the President, the Secretary of State, and other Executive branch officials, in consultation with Congress, should seek to find ways to address existing violations, on a case-by-case basis, through the actions specified in section 405 or other commensurate action in substitution thereto.”.

SEC. 305. PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER.

Section 408(a)(1) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6448(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “Any designation of a non-state actor as an entity of particular concern for religious freedom under section 301 of the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, together with, when applicable and to the extent practicable, the identities of individuals determined to be responsible for the violations under subsection (e) of such section.”.

TITLE IV—PROMOTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**SEC. 401. ASSISTANCE FOR PROMOTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.**

(a) **AVAILABILITY OF ASSISTANCE.**—It is the sense of Congress that for each fiscal year that begins on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Department of State should make available—

(1) an amount equal to not less than 10 percent of the amounts available in that fiscal year for the Human Rights and Democracy Fund for the promotion of international religious freedom and for projects to advance United States interests in the protection and advancement of international religious freedom, in particular, through grants to—

(A) groups that are able to develop legal protections or promote cultural and societal understanding of international norms of religious freedom;

(B) groups that seek to address and mitigate religiously motivated and sectarian violence and combat violent extremism; and

(C) groups that seek to strengthen investigations, reporting, and monitoring of religious freedom violations; and

(2) an amount equal to not less than 2 percent of amounts available in that fiscal year for the Human Rights and Democracy Fund to be made available for the establishment of a Religious Freedom Defense Fund, administered by the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, to provide grants for—

(A) victims of religious freedom abuses and their families to cover legal and other expenses that may arise from detention, imprisonment, torture, fines, and other restrictions; and

(B) projects to help create and support training of a new generation of defenders of religious freedom, including legal and political advocates, and civil society projects which seek to create advocacy networks, strengthen legal representation, train and educate new religious freedom defenders, and build the capacity of religious communities and rights defenders to protect against religious freedom violations, mitigate societal or sectarian violence, or minimize legal or other restrictions of the right to freedom of religion.

(b) **PREFERENCE.**—It is the sense of Congress that, in providing grants under subsection (a), the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom should, as appropriate, give preference to projects targeting religious freedom violations in countries designated as countries of particular concern for religious freedom under section 402(b)(1) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6442(b)(1)) and countries included on the Special Watch List described in section 102(b)(1)(F)(iii) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6412(b)(1)(F)(iii)).

(c) **ADMINISTRATION AND CONSULTATIONS.**—

(1) **ADMINISTRATION.**—Amounts made available in accordance with subsection (a) shall be administered by the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.

(2) **CONSULTATIONS.**—In developing priorities and policies for providing grants in accordance with subsection (a), including priorities and policies for identification of potential grantees, the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom shall consult with other Federal agencies, including the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and, as appropriate, nongovernmental organizations.

TITLE V—DESIGNATED PERSONS LIST FOR PARTICULARLY SEVERE VIOLATIONS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**SEC. 501. DESIGNATED PERSONS LIST FOR PARTICULARLY SEVERE VIOLATIONS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.**

Title VI of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6471 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 605 as section 606; and

(2) by inserting after section 604 the following new section:

“SEC. 605. DESIGNATED PERSONS LIST FOR PARTICULARLY SEVERE VIOLATIONS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

“(a) **LIST.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Ambassador at Large and in consultation with relevant government and non-government experts, shall establish and maintain a list of foreign individuals who are sanctioned, through visa denials, financial sanctions, or other measures, because they are responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing particularly severe violations of freedom of religion.

“(2) **REFERENCE.**—The list required under paragraph (1) shall be known as the ‘Designated Persons List for Particularly Severe Violations of Religious Freedom’.

“(b) **REPORT.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that contains the list required under subsection (a), including, with respect to each foreign individual on the list—

“(A) the name of the individual and a description of the particularly severe violation of religious freedom committed by the individual;

“(B) the name of the country or other location in which such violation took place; and

“(C) a description of the actions taken pursuant to this Act or any other Act or Executive order in response to such violation; and

“(2) **SUBMISSION AND UPDATES.**—The Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees—

“(A) the initial report required under paragraph (1) not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section; and

“(B) updates to the report every 180 days thereafter and as new information becomes available.

“(3) **FORM.**—The report required under paragraph (1) should be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

“(4) **DEFINITION.**—In this subsection, the term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ means—

“(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

“(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.”.

TITLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**SEC. 601. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.**

Title VII of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6481 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new sections:

“SEC. 702. VOLUNTARY CODES OF CONDUCT FOR UNITED STATES INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES.

“(a) **FINDING.**—Congress recognizes the enduring importance of United States institutions of higher education worldwide both for their potential for shaping positive leadership and new educational models in host countries and for their emphasis on teaching universally recognized rights of free inquiry and academic freedom.

“(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that United States institutions of higher education operating campuses outside the United States or establishing any educational entities with foreign governments, particularly with or in countries the governments of which engage in or tolerate severe violations of religious freedom as identified in the Annual Report, should seek to adopt a voluntary code of conduct for operating in such countries that should—

“(1) uphold the right of freedom of religion of their employees and students, including the right to manifest that religion peacefully as protected in international law;

“(2) ensure that the religious views and peaceful practice of religion in no way affect, or be allowed to affect, the status of a worker’s or faculty member’s employment or a student’s enrollment; and

“(3) make every effort in all negotiations, contracts, or memoranda of understanding engaged in or constructed with a foreign government to protect academic freedom and the rights enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

“SEC. 703. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THROUGH UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY.

“It is the sense of Congress that—

“(1) the annual national security strategy report of the President required by section 108 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3043) should promote international religious freedom as a foreign policy and national security priority and should articulate that promotion of the right to freedom of religion is a strategy that protects other, related human rights, and advances democracy outside the United States, and make clear its importance to United States foreign policy goals of stability, security, development, and diplomacy; and

“(2) the national security strategy report should be a guide for the strategies and activities of relevant Federal agencies and inform the Department of Defense quadrennial defense review under section 118 of title 10, United States Code, and the Department of State Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review.”.

SEC. 602. CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.

The table of contents of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 note) is amended—

(1) by striking the item relating to section 605 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 606. Studies on the effect of expedited removal provisions on asylum claims.”;

(2) by inserting after the item relating to section 604 the following:

“Sec. 605. Designated Persons List for Particularly Severe Violations of Religious Freedom.”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“Sec. 702. Voluntary codes of conduct for United States institutions of higher education operating outside the United States.

“Sec. 703. Sense of Congress regarding national security strategy to promote religious freedom through United States foreign policy.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may

have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today, 18 years after enactment of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, the right to believe and practice one’s faith remains under threat around the world.

The threats come not just from authoritarian regimes obsessed with control, such as North Korea, Iran, or Vietnam, which were the focus of that law, but also from lethal terrorist groups.

Two months ago this Chamber made history by declaring that the so-called Islamic State, or ISIS, is committing genocide against religious and ethnic minorities. It has committed mass murder, beheadings, rape, torture, slavery, and the kidnapping of children, among many other atrocities. ISIS dynamites churches and flattens ancient monasteries, hoping to erase the very existence of religious groups that disagree with their brutal world view.

Boko Haram in Nigeria and al Shabaab in East Africa are also responsible for their own deadly persecutions, both also linked to ISIS in their support for that terrorist movement.

These groups have turned religious intolerance into a murderous force of global instability. The right to believe and practice according to the dictates of conscience is a direct challenge to their ideologies. Thus, religious freedom is not just a human rights issue; frankly, today, it is a global security issue. However, current law related to religious freedom, which focuses solely on governments of sovereign states, does not address this reality.

Based on years of oversight and multiple hearings, H.R. 1150, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, updates the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to improve the coordination and effectiveness of U.S. efforts to promote religious liberty around the world and also expressly addresses the role of these non-state actors like ISIS.

Introduced by Subcommittee Chairman SMITH and Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO, the bill was amended and agreed to by the Foreign Affairs Committee and has more than 115 bipartisan cosponsors.

It is fitting that this bill is named in honor of our former colleague from Virginia, Frank Wolf, a tireless advocate for human rights and the author of the original International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, which we are amending.

By enhancing coordination, confronting non-state actors, and improving reporting and training, H.R. 1150 is a helpful refinement of our statutory commitment to combat religious persecution around the globe. It deserves our unanimous support.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, May 13, 2016.

Hon. ED ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing concerning H.R. 1150, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016.

As a result of your having consulted with the Committee on Financial Services concerning provisions in the bill that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction, I agree to forgo action on the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor. The Committee on Financial Services takes this action with our mutual understanding that, by foregoing consideration of H.R. 1150 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction. Our Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for any such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 1150 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in your committee’s report to accompany the legislation, as well as in the Congressional Record during floor consideration thereof.

Sincerely,
JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, May 12, 2016.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R. 1150, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, and for agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of that bill.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Financial Services, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 1150 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with your committee as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,
EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,

Washington, DC, May 13, 2016.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write concerning H.R. 1150, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2015. As you know,

the Committee on Foreign Affairs received an original referral and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform a secondary referral when the bill was introduced on February 27, 2015. I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House of Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform will forego action on the bill.

The Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 1150 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. Further, I request your support for the appointment of conferees from the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform during any House-Senate conference convened on this or related legislation.

Finally, I would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the bill report filed by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as well as in the Congressional Record during floor consideration, to memorialize our understanding

Sincerely,

JASON CHAFFETZ,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, May 12, 2016.

Hon. JASON CHAFFETZ,
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R. 1150, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, and for agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of that bill.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 1150 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with your committee as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure. Let me again thank Chairman ED ROYCE for bringing this bill forward. I also want to thank my friend, Congressman CHRIS SMITH of New Jersey, for his leadership and for authorizing this bill.

Mr. Speaker, freedom of religion has been a bedrock principle of open and democratic societies for centuries. Some of the first immigrants to settle on American shores sailed here because they were fleeing religious persecution at home. This liberty is enshrined in our own founding documents, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in the charters of democracies all over the world.

The freedom to worship as a person chooses or not to worship at all should be settled business and nobody's busi-

ness but the person themselves. Yet, around the world religious communities endure discrimination, persecution, and violence.

It is amazing to me that, when we look at the history of strife and war that has swirled around religious persecution, governments continue to deny this freedom to their own people. This assault on religious liberty holds societies back and undercuts progress. It obviously has no place in the 21st century.

So for the United States and other countries that cherish freedom, it is not enough just to guarantee religious liberty to our own people. We need to speak out and act when we see this right under attack around the world. For that matter, we have a responsibility to speak out when we see any liberty under attack, whether freedom of the press, the right to organize, or the equality of LGBT persons.

Mr. SMITH's legislation would help ensure that promoting and supporting religious liberty are a component of American foreign policy. It would help ensure that our diplomats around the world understand the importance of this issue and are working to advance this freedom on the front lines.

It is worth noting that we should also continue to fully fund the State Department's Human Rights and Democracy Fund, which helps address a range of human rights abuses around the world, including threats to our religious freedom. Together with this legislation, it sends a clear message to the world that protecting human rights is a priority for the United States.

So I support this measure. I urge my colleagues to do the same. I again want to congratulate my friend Mr. SMITH, who is so strong on issues like this and so forceful in pushing forward all the way until we finally got this on the floor of the House.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, and the author of the bill.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, Chairman ROYCE, for his leadership on this bill, the markup, and for the very timely recommendations he and staff made to improve it.

I would like to thank ELIOT ENGEL again for working hand in glove in a good, bipartisan effort to protect international religious freedom.

As my good friend, Chairman ROYCE, noted a moment ago, 18 years ago Congress had the foresight to pass the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. That landmark bill, authored by Congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia, made advancing the right to religious freedom a significant and profoundly serious U.S. foreign policy priority.

Passage of the International Religious Freedom Act was not easy. There were determined opponents in Congress and in the Clinton administration. I know. I chaired the congressional hearings and the subcommittee markup. It was no cakewalk.

But our opposition was overcome by the courage, tenacity, and vision of Frank Wolf, bolstered by a diverse, bipartisan, and ecumenical coalition of Members of Congress, ethnic minority and religious groups, and human rights organizations. That coalition has reassembled to support this bill today, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act.

I want to especially thank ANNA ESHOO, who is the principal Democratic sponsor of this legislation, for her leadership and for working particularly in the Middle East to combat the savagery that is being imposed upon people of minority faiths, including Christians.

□ 1700

I thank her for her leadership and, again, for being the principal Democrat on this bill.

Let me just note that naming this bill after Frank Wolf, who I consider to be, and many of us consider to be the William Wilberforce of modern times, is an attempt to recognize his extraordinary life's work promoting human rights, 34 years as a Member of Congress, including, and especially, religious freedom.

He now serves as the Wilson Chair at Baylor, again, continuing his lifesaving work for religious believers all over the world.

He just returned from Nigeria and testified at our hearing last week. He was in the embattled states in northern Nigeria, where Boko Haram runs free, massacring people. He was there on a fact-finding mission to promote religious freedom.

Mr. Speaker, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act that is before us is a series of upgrades to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

We know that the world is experiencing an unprecedented crisis of international religious freedom; a crisis that continues to create millions—no, tens of millions of victims; a crisis that undermines liberty, prosperity, and peace; a crisis that poses a direct challenge to the U.S. interests in the Middle East, Russia, China, Sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere in the world.

The Pew Research Center notes that over 75 percent of the world's population today lives in countries where severe religious freedom abuses occur annually. According to Pew, instances of anti-Semitism are at a 7-year high. It is getting worse everywhere, particularly in the Middle East, but also in Europe and in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, ancient Christian communities in Iraq and Syria are on the verge of extinction, and other religious minorities in the Middle East face a

constant assault from the Islamic State.

Several weeks ago, this Congress passed a resolution, sponsored by JEFF FORTENBERRY, that was followed by a declaration by Secretary of State John Kerry, that said that ISIS has committed, and continues to commit genocide, mass atrocities and war crimes against Christians, Yazidis, and other minority faiths.

We are on record. We know it is happening. We are speaking out.

In a couple of weeks, I am chairing a hearing on what is next; what should we be doing next to combat this terrible, terrible crisis.

In Nigeria, the Islamist terror group, Boko Haram, is believed to have killed over 6,600 people last year alone, mostly Christian, but there are Muslims as well who are being targeted. According to the testimony we received last week, since 2009, the number is about 15,000 year to date since 2009.

Mr. Speaker, at one of those hearings a few years ago, I had a man named Habila. Habila, I met him at an IDP camp in Jos, Nigeria, where a lot of churches have been firebombed. He told me this story. He was credible, and it checked out. And he came to Congress and testified.

Boko Haram put an AK-47—a terrorist—to his jaw and said: Renounce Christ or I will kill you. You must become a Muslim on the spot.

Habila said: I am ready to meet my Lord.

And this terrorist pulled the trigger and blew most of his face away.

What courage, what faith for a man. And when he told the story, you could have heard a pin drop.

Mr. Speaker, the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom just released its 2016 annual report. And let me note, parenthetically, USCIRF, or that Commission, was also created by Chairman Wolf as part of IRFA, the original bill.

They have found that the abuses committed by governments and non-state actors has “deteriorated.” “The incarceration of prisoners of conscience”—they point out—“remains astonishingly widespread . . .”

They point out that “Over the past year, the Chinese government”—as just one of many examples—“has stepped up its persecution of religious groups”—across the board: Tibetans, Uighurs, Muslim Uighurs, Christians, and, of course, the Falun Gong.

I spoke in mid-February at NYU, I gave a keynote there in Shanghai, and talked about how Xi Jinping, the President of China, is in a race to the bottom with North Korea to make religion absolutely subservient to the Communist Party. He calls it the sinification of religion; and what was already a bad situation has now become demonstrably worse.

The Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act will upgrade the tools so that this administration, and subsequent ones, can do an even better

job to try to mitigate and, hopefully, end religious persecution. It does this by, one, requiring that international religious freedom policies be integrated into national security, immigration, rule of law, and other relevant U.S. foreign policies.

It creates a Designated Persons List of individuals sanctioned for participating in or directing religious freedom abuses.

It expands diplomatic training on international religious freedoms for all State Department diplomats; creates a tier system for IRFA, for the reports, not just countries of particular concern, of which there are currently 10, but also those that are on a watch list, those that are bad and, perhaps, getting worse.

It gives the President authority to designate non-state actors in addition to countries; and it also requires the Ambassador at Large to report directly to the Secretary of State.

It also is increasingly clear that religious freedom diplomacy is really needed to advance U.S. interests around the world. This will do it.

The legislation is backed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the International Religious Freedom Roundtable, a diverse and ecumenical group of individuals from the faith community.

Finally, just let me thank Scott Flipse, who worked for Frank Wolf previously, then he worked for the International Religious Freedom Office at the State Department, and now is working at the China Commission; our General Counsel, Piero Tozzi; Janice Kaguyutan, I thank her for her work on this; and Sajit Gandhi. This is a true, bipartisan piece of legislation and, hopefully, the Senate will favorably receive it.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Again, Mr. Speaker, in closing, we focus on human rights as part of our foreign policy because it is the right thing to do. The United States is founded on the idea that an individual should be able to live according to his or her own beliefs. That is a value we want to see thriving around the world.

Advancing human rights is also the smart thing to do. Countries with a strong respect for human rights are countries that prosper and play a constructive role on the global stage.

I want to again say to my friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), when he comes for advancing human rights, he takes a second seat to nobody. He is indefatigable when it comes to these things. In all the years I have known him, he has always been fair and honest. I really sincerely commend him, and know how heartfelt it is and how much we appreciate his hard work.

When we see governments stifling religious freedom, or any freedom, we have a responsibility to speak out and make it clear that the United States remains a champion for these basic lib-

erties. This bill helps us to live up to that responsibility, and I am proud to support it.

I thank Chairman ROYCE and Mr. SMITH.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK), our esteemed colleague, who ably represents the district formerly served by Frank Wolf, who is honored in the title of this bill. Representative BARBARA COMSTOCK is a coauthor of this bill with Mr. SMITH, and I thank them both.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, ask human rights and religious freedom advocates to name their most steadfast friend who has served on Capitol Hill over the years, and Representative Frank Wolf, my predecessor, is always on the short list, as are my colleagues here today.

So I am honored today to stand in support of a bill I proudly cosponsored, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, named after the distinguished gentleman who served in this seat for the 10th District of Virginia, and as the co-chair of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, and a man whose deep faith and commitment to human rights and religion freedom were a large part of why he was known for years here and around the country, and even around the world, as the conscience of the Congress.

He wrote a book, a powerful book, titled a “Prisoner of Conscience,” about his many trips over the years and how he fought for religious freedom; and I hope he doesn’t mind if I recommend that book to our listeners here.

We continue to be blessed with Congressman Wolf’s passionate leadership as he leads the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative to create a world where religious freedom is recognized by nations across the globe as a fundamental human right.

Since leaving Congress, Mr. Wolf has continued to travel to the front lines to see, firsthand, the plight of ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria, including Christians, Yazidis, Kurds, and other minority religious groups.

As previously mentioned, he has just returned from Nigeria. He continues to shine a light every day on the dark places where men and women and children, even, of faith are victimized, tortured and, tragically, even killed for their faith. He will not let the world look away, and we thank him for his continued work and his strong and much-needed voice.

Now this legislation amends his own legislation to continue that mission that Mr. Wolf so valiantly fought for for 3 decades here in Congress. It will improve the ability of the United States to advance religious freedom globally, with stronger and more flexible political responses to a disturbing and growing denial of basic religious freedoms around the world.

As has been said by many, Frank Wolf is the William Wilberforce of our day. He is, and has always been, a voice for the voiceless. He once said: "Most would agree that conscience rights figure prominently in the narrative of America's founding. Historically, Americans and our corresponding institutions have recognized that conscience is not ultimately allegiant to the state, but to something, and for many people, Someone, higher."

I appreciate the opportunity today to continue that legacy with the passing of this important legislation which will continue his important and vital mission and legacy; and that is needed now, more than ever, for so many of the reasons that my colleagues here have highlighted.

I thank the gentleman so much for the privilege of addressing and cosponsoring this legislation.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for their contributions to this bill and to today's debate, especially Mr. SMITH, Congresswoman BARBARA COMSTOCK and Mr. ENGEL.

The right to believe and practice one's religion according to the dictates of conscience is often called the first freedom. It is one of the founding ideas of our Nation, but we do not believe that it is only an American value. Rather, this is what we believe here. We believe it flows from the inherent dignity of every human person, and it deserves protection everywhere.

In today's world, those who are most violently opposed to religious freedom also pose the biggest threat to our Nation. They also pose the biggest threat to civilization worldwide.

Thus, the promotion of religious liberty is not some isolated human rights concern. No. It is a key component of our national security. And this bill, now authored by Mr. SMITH, H.R. 1150, contains important updates to the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 that will enhance the effectiveness of the United States' efforts to promote that liberty around the world, so it deserves our unanimous support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1150, amending the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act.

I support this measure because the right to freedom of religion has been a cornerstone of the American conscience.

Many of our country's first leaders fled religious persecution abroad and went on to establish laws protecting religious freedom.

This core belief of our great nation does not stop at our national borders; we offer refuge to those suffering from religious persecution throughout the world.

A testament to this commitment was the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 which was a landmark piece of legislation seeking to make religious freedom a higher priority in U.S. Foreign policy.

The Act was approved by Congress unanimously in 1998 and signed into law by President Clinton.

The Act condemns violations of religious freedom and promotes and assists other governments in the promotion of the fundamental right to freedom of religion.

While strides have been made in establishing worldwide practice of freedom of religion, it is currently under attack.

Let me also note that people are being prosecuted under blasphemy laws for freedom of expression, which is why I introduced the bipartisan measure H. Res. 290, calling for the global repeal of blasphemy laws.

I support H.R. 1150 because we must continue to work to preserve religious freedoms as well as making sure that religion is not a pretext for prosecution or persecution in the world.

Indeed, one of the key amendments to IRFA would be to relocate the Office of International Religious Freedom within the Office of the Secretary of State.

This action would allow for greater coordination of strategic focus and the minimization of duplicated efforts, streamline mandates, and centralize efforts to engage religious communities and promote human rights more generally in regards to religious freedom.

Currently, the office is headed by the Ambassador at-Large for International Religious Freedom which monitors religious persecution and discrimination worldwide to develop policy recommendations, programs, and awareness.

Besides being placed in the Secretary of State's office, the Ambassador at large would be able to make every effort to collaborate and coordinate across all U.S. agencies and departments to formulate strategic religious freedom policies, programs, and activities.

These two changes will provide a greater ability for us to advance religious freedom throughout the world.

H.R. 1150 will also allow us to assist emerging democracies to implement freedom of religion while also helping older partners maintain their freedom of religion practices and conscience.

H.R. 1150 calls to ensure that our diplomats and foreign policy experts are well versed in the importance of religious freedom and how to address atrocities related to religion.

H.R. 1150 also addresses how to improve our ability to promote freedom of religion by enhancing the capabilities and knowledge of our diplomats.

Our Foreign Service Officers (FSO) are on the front lines everyday carrying out American foreign policy while also shaping it, which makes sure that they are adequately trained on religious freedom.

H.R. 1150 directs the Secretary to develop mandatory religious freedom training for all Foreign Service Officers.

This major change will enhance FSO capabilities to identify severe persecutors to help assemble the Ambassador's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom.

In addition to the Annual Report, H.R. 1150 calls for an updated lists of persons that are currently being persecuted and forced to renounce their faith.

This is essential in bringing awareness to countries that need to be monitored or that have non-state actors that have high levels of detention, disappearance, torture, or murder based on someone's religion.

Another key aspect of H.R. 1150 is to enhance engagement and coordination with the executive branch on issues pertaining to inter-

national religious freedom policies and global religion engagement strategies.

This would be achieved through amendment of The National Security Act of 1947, calling for the appointment of a Special Adviser for Global Religious Engagement and establishing the Interagency Policy Committee on Religious Freedom and Engagement.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support adequate funding in order to enable rapid and decisive efforts of supporting democracy and preservation of human rights.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1150, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1715

REQUIRING COMPTROLLER GENERAL TO ASSESS OPTIONS FOR DISPOSITION OF PLUM ISLAND ANIMAL DISEASE CENTER IN PLUM ISLAND, NEW YORK

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1887) to amend certain appropriation Acts to repeal the requirement directing the Administrator of General Services to sell Federal property and assets that support the operations of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in Plum Island, New York, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1887

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The Federal Government has owned Plum Island, New York, since 1899.

(2) Since 1954, the Plum Island Animal Disease Center has conducted unrivaled scientific research on a variety of infectious animal-borne diseases, including foot-and-mouth disease, resulting, most recently, in the development of a new cell line that rapidly and reliably detects this highly debilitating disease of livestock.

(3) Over 62 years, the Center has had a strong, proven record of safety.

(4) \$23,200,000 in Federal dollars have been spent on upgrades to, and the maintenance of, the Center since January 2012.

(5) In addition to the Center, Plum Island contains cultural, historical, ecological, and natural resources of regional and national significance.

(6) Plum Island is situated where the Long Island Sound and Peconic Bay meet, both of which are estuaries that are part of the National Estuary Program and are environmentally and economically significant to the region.

(7) The Federal Government has invested hundreds of millions of Federal dollars over the last two decades to make long-term improvements with respect to the conservation and management needs of Long Island Sound and Peconic Bay.