

Just a few weeks ago, Mayor Fenty signed this important legislation, which was passed by unanimous consent by the D.C. Council. National Popular Vote is now law in 7 jurisdictions, and has been passed by 30 legislative chambers in 21 states.

The shortcomings of the current system stem from the winner-take-all rule. Presidential candidates have no reason to pay attention to the concerns of voters in states where they are comfortably ahead or hopelessly behind. In 2008, candidates concentrated over two-thirds of their campaign visits and ad money in just six closely divided "battleground" states. A total of 98 percent of their resources went to just 15 states. Voters in two thirds of the states are essentially just spectators to presidential elections.

Under the National Popular Vote, all the electoral votes from the enacting states would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and DC. The bill assures that every vote will matter in every state in every Presidential election.

I look forward to more states, all across the country passing this important piece of legislation.

WILL CHRISTIANITY SURVIVE IN IRAQ?

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I submit for the RECORD a letter I received from the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council of America regarding the plight of Iraq's ancient Christian community, which is increasingly under assault and facing near extinction from the lands they have inhabited for centuries. The Wall Street Journal just yesterday noted on its editorial page that "some still speak the Aramaic, the ancient language of Jesus Christ."

The Journal further noted that of "the 100,000 Christians who once lived in Mosul, Iraq, only some 5,000 are still there."

While the situation in Iraq is perhaps the most glaring, it is but representative of a larger trend in the Middle East where religious minorities face growing discrimination, repression and outright persecution. The Journal continued, "In Egypt, Coptic Christians have been brutalized. Assaults on churches increase around Easter or Christmas, as worshipers attempt to observe holy days."

During this season of Advent as millions around the world anticipate Christmas, let us be mindful of the fear gripping these communities and commit ourselves to prioritizing their protection and preservation throughout the Middle East. We have a moral obligation to do nothing less. For as the famed abolitionist William Wilberforce once said, "Having heard all this, you may choose to look the other way, but you can never again say that you did not know."

I close with the solemn warning of the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council of America to President Obama, in a letter sent this November, in which they noted that the current

situation in Iraq "promises more innocent Christian blood in Iraq, more turmoil in that country, and more shame for America."

CHALDEAN ASSYRIAN SYRIAC
COUNCIL OF AMERICA,

Southfield, MI, December 6, 2010.

Congressman FRANK WOLF,
House of Representatives, Cannon Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WOLF: We are witnessing a tragic and historic event: The end of Iraq's native Christian community. And, even more tragically, this has happened due in part because of failed U.S. Policy, with the majority of congressional members taking little or no notice of the destruction of an ethnic and religious identity few know about.

The Christians of Iraq are also known as Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriacs or Arameans (or even ChaldoAssyrians or Chaldean Syriac Assyrians). They are the heirs of the ancient and pre-Christian civilization of Mesopotamia, the descents of the Assyrians and Babylonians of old. They are also the descents of the first Semitic-speaking Christians, whose churches spanned the entire Middle East and reached China and Japan. At one time, what is today known as the Assyrian Church of the East had more adherents than the Catholic and Protestant Churches combined. Their language is Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ.

Mesopotamia holds a special place in Biblical history. It is the land from which Abraham left his home, "Ur of the Chaldees;" where the Hebrew people lived their captivity and survived into the modern era; where the fall of Nineveh was foreseen by the Prophet Nahum, whose grave lies in Alqush, in Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria visited by the Prophet Jonah; where Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt the glorious Babylon where the Prophet Daniel lived.

During the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad (758-1258 AD), Mesopotamia's Christians contributed greatly to the advancement of Islamic civilization through their literary and scientific accomplishments, including the translations of important Greek works into Syriac (Aramaic) and Arabic. It was through such accomplishments that the West came to know of the "Golden Age" of Islamic civilization and the Caliphate of Baghdad. Indeed, the very existence of the "House of Wisdom," an institution dedicated to the translation and documentation of all knowledge on philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and other sciences into Arabic at the time owes itself to the Christians of Iraq.

As a result of the turbulence caused by a pattern of religious persecution and ethnic intolerance, the Christians of Iraq maintained themselves in the area of northern Mesopotamia or Assyria, also known as the Nineveh Plain. Here, and in the surrounding areas, they maintained their religious and ethnic identity and lived in hundreds of villages that dotted the landscape around the Tigris River until the coming modernity, at which time they suffered massacres and genocides at the hands of the Ottomans and their supporters. The First World War saw the uprooting and destruction of hundreds of Aramaic-speaking Christian villages in what is today Southeastern Turkey, Northwestern Iran, and Northern Iraq. Still, the Christian population survived, with its ethnic and religious identity intact.

The formation of the Kingdom Iraq resulted in further tragedy for Christians, with the most infamous being the Semele Massacre; where thousands of women, children, and unarmed men were slaughtered in cold

blood, after being given assurances of protection by the Iraqi government. Crowds in Baghdad streets jubilantly welcomed Iraqi soldiers in what may be one of the most shameful displays in Iraqi history.

Despite the tragedies, the Christian population recovered and helped usher in an age of education and enlightenment for Iraq. Christians made up the most prominent doctors, engineers and scientists in Iraq. As any knowledgeable Iraqi would attest, they constituted, as a group, the most valuable human asset Iraq had. And despite the regime of Saddam Hussein, though politically repressed, Christians excelled in business and science.

Today, this minority may not be so lucky. The massacre that took place in the Lady of Salvation Church on Sunday, October 31, 2010, and the subsequent targeted killings afterwards, has many Christian leaders speaking of leaving Iraq for good. Recently, Archbishop Athanasios Dawood of the Syriac Orthodox Church is saying, "I say clearly and now—the Christian people should leave their beloved land of our ancestors and escape the premeditated ethnic cleansing," he told BBC. "This is better than having them killed one by one."

Scholars Eden Naby and Jamsheed Chosky recently wrote in Foreign Policy that the end of Christianity in Iraq is near. In a letter to President Obama, the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council of America, an organization serving this community in the United States, noted that the current situation "promises more innocent Christian blood in Iraq, more turmoil in that country, and more shame for America."

As members of the world community, and as Americans, we bear a responsibility not to allow the disintegration and destruction of this community. Clearly, our entry into Iraq has caused consequences that we cannot walk away from.

Iraq's Christians have a unique heritage whose loss will be mourned by not only Iraq, but the United States and the World. Some have proposed a wholesale evacuation of this community in order to save it. Yet, there are other viable options; such as the recognition of an autonomous zone to be protected and monitored by the United Nations and the United States. It is time to consider the plight of this community seriously and propose action.

Regards,

ISMAT KARMO,
Chairman.

H.R. 4173, THE DODD-FRANK WALL STREET REFORM AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT—CLARIFICATION OF INTENT WITH RESPECT TO TITLE V, SUBTITLE B

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, as a House conferee for H.R. 4173, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act ("Dodd-Frank Act"), and the chief sponsor of the Nonadmitted and Reinsurance Reform Act (NRIIRA) that was included as Title V, Subtitle B of the Dodd-Frank Act, I rise to reaffirm these important provisions. The President signed the Dodd-Frank Act into law earlier this year (P.L. 111-203).