

PROVIDING FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 78,  
PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED  
STATES RESTORING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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JUNE 3, 1998.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

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Mrs. MYRICK, from the Committee on Rules,  
submitted the following

## REPORT

[To accompany H. Res. 453]

The Committee on Rules, having had under consideration House Resolution 453, by a non-record vote, report the same to the House with the recommendation that the resolution be adopted.

### BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS OF RESOLUTION

The resolution provides for the consideration of House Joint Resolution 78, "Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States Restoring Religious Freedom" under a modified closed rule. The rule provides that the joint resolution shall be considered in the House, considered as read, and that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the joint resolution shall be considered as adopted.

The rule provides that the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except as specified. The rule provides for two hours of debate on the joint resolution, as amended, equally divided between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. The rule provides for consideration of a further amendment printed in this report, which may be offered only by the Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, and shall be separately debatable for one hour equally divided between the proponent and an opponent. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE BISHOP AMENDMENT

The first portion of the Bishop Amendment would establish as the amendment's purpose to secure the people's right to "freedom of religion" as opposed to the Committee's version which would secure the people's right to "acknowledge God". Because "God" is a term used in western religions to refer to a diety but other religious faiths use other terms such as Allah, Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma (Hinduism), and Kami (Shintoism). Some, such as Taoism are not centered about a diety.

The second portion of the Bishop Amendment would simply remove the "deny equal access to a benefit" language and prohibit the United States or any State from requiring any person to join in prayer or other religious activity, prescribe school prayers, or otherwise compel or discriminate against religion.

This would eliminate a lightning rod for litigation over what constitutes denial of equal access to a benefit on account of religion.

THE AMENDMENT TO BE OFFERED BY REPRESENTATIVE BISHOP OF  
GEORGIA OR A DESIGNEE, DEBATABLE FOR NOT TO EXCEED 60  
MINUTES

Page 3, line 18, strike "acknowledge God" and insert "freedom of religion".

Page 4, beginning in line 1, strike "discriminate against religion, or deny equal access to a benefit on account of religion" and insert "or otherwise compel or discriminate against religion".