

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2079

To reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

Mr. CORKER (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. DURBIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “United States Commis-
5 sion on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization
6 Act of 2015”.

7 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

8 It is the sense of the Congress that the United States
9 Commission on International Religious Freedom—

1 (1) was created by Congress to independently
2 assess and to accurately and unflinchingly describe
3 threats to religious freedom around the world; and

4 (2) in carrying out its prescribed duties, should
5 use its authorized powers to ensure that efforts by
6 the United States to advance religious freedom
7 abroad are timely, appropriate to the circumstances,
8 prudent, and effective.

9 **SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.**

10 Section 209 of the International Religious Freedom
11 Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6436) is amended by striking
12 “September 30, 2015” and inserting “September 30,
13 2019”.

14 **SEC. 4. STRATEGIC PLAN.**

15 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
17 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
18 mittees” means—

19 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
20 the Senate;

21 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
22 the House of Representatives;

23 (C) the Committee on Appropriations of
24 the Senate; and

1 (D) the Committee on Appropriations of
2 the House of Representatives.

3 (2) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
4 means the United States Commission on Inter-
5 national Religious Freedom established under sec-
6 tion 201 of the International Religious Freedom Act
7 of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6431).

8 (3) COMMISSIONER.—The term “Commis-
9 sioner” means a member of the Commission.

10 (4) VICE CHAIR.—The term “Vice Chair”
11 means the Vice Chair of the Commission who was
12 appointed to such position by an elected official from
13 the political party that is different from the political
14 party of the elected official who appointed the Chair
15 of the Commission.

16 (b) STRATEGIC POLICY AND ORGANIZATIONAL RE-
17 VIEW PLANNING PROCESS.—Not later than 60 days after
18 the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less fre-
19 quently than biennially thereafter, the Chair and Vice
20 Chair of the Commission, in coordination with the Com-
21 missioners, the Ambassador-at-Large for International
22 Religious Freedom, Commission staff, and others jointly
23 selected by the Chair and Vice Chair, shall carry out a
24 strategic policy and organizational review planning process
25 that includes—

1 (1) a review of the duties set forth in section
2 202 of the International Religious Freedom Act of
3 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432) and the powers set forth in
4 section 203 of such Act (22 U.S.C. 6432a);

5 (2) the preparation of a written description of
6 prioritized actions that the Commission is required
7 to complete to fulfill the strategic plan required
8 under subsection (d);

9 (3) a review of the scope, content, and timing
10 of the Commission's annual report and any required
11 changes; and

12 (4) a review of the personnel policies set forth
13 in section 204 of the International Religious Free-
14 dom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432b) and any re-
15 quired changes to such policies.

16 (c) UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—To the greatest extent pos-
18 sible, the Chair, Vice Chair, and all of the Commis-
19 sioners shall ensure that this section is implemented
20 in a manner that results in unanimous agreement
21 among the Commissioners with regard to—

22 (A) the strategic policy and organizational
23 review planning process required under sub-
24 section (b); and

1 (B) the strategic plan required under sub-
2 section (d).

3 (2) ALTERNATIVE APPROVAL PROCESS.—If
4 unanimous agreement under paragraph (1) is not
5 possible, items for inclusion in the strategic plan
6 may, at the joint discretion of the Chair and Vice
7 Chair, be approved by an affirmative vote of—

8 (A) a majority of Commissioners appointed
9 by an elected official from the political party of
10 the President; and

11 (B) a majority of Commissioners appointed
12 by an elected official from the political party
13 that is not the party of the President.

14 (d) SUBMISSION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.—Not later
15 than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Act,
16 and not less frequently than biennially thereafter, the
17 Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission shall jointly sub-
18 mit, to the appropriate congressional committees, a writ-
19 ten strategic plan that includes—

20 (1) a description of prioritized actions for the
21 Commission for a period of time to be specified by
22 the Commissioners;

23 (2) a description of any changes the Commis-
24 sion considers necessary with regard to the scope,

1 content, and timing of the Commission’s annual re-
2 port;

3 (3) a description of any changes the Commis-
4 sion considers necessary with regard to personnel
5 matters; and

6 (4) the Commission’s funding requirements for
7 the period covered by the strategic plan.

8 (e) PENDING ISSUES.—The strategic plan required
9 under subsection (d) may identify any issues or proposals
10 that have not yet been resolved by the Commission.

11 (f) IMPLEMENTATION OF PERSONNEL PROVISIONS
12 AND ANNUAL REPORT.—Notwithstanding section 204(a)
13 and 205(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of
14 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432b(a) and 6533(a)), the Commission
15 is authorized to implement provisions related to personnel
16 and the Commission’s annual report that are included in
17 the strategic plan submitted pursuant to this section.

18 (g) CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.—Upon request,
19 the Commission shall—

20 (1) make available for inspection any informa-
21 tion and documents requested by the appropriate
22 congressional committees; and

23 (2) respond to any requests to provide testi-
24 mony before the appropriate congressional commit-
25 tees.

1 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 Section 207 of the International Religious Freedom
3 Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6435) is amended to read as fol-
4 lows:

5 **“SEC. 207. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

6 “(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be ap-
7 propriated to the Commission \$3,500,000 for each of the
8 fiscal years 2016 to 2019 to carry out the provisions of
9 this Act and section 4 of the United States Commission
10 on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act
11 of 2015.

12 “(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts authorized
13 to be appropriated under subsection (a) shall remain avail-
14 able until the earlier of—

15 “(1) the date on which they have been ex-
16 pended; or

17 “(2) the date on which the Commission is ter-
18 minated under section 209.

19 “(c) LIMITATION.—In each fiscal year, the Commis-
20 sion shall only be authorized to expend amounts that have
21 been appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) if the Com-
22 mission—

23 “(1) complies with the requirements set forth in
24 section 4 of the United States Commission on Inter-
25 national Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of
26 2015; and

1 “(2) submits the annual financial report re-
2 quired under section 208(e) to the appropriate con-
3 gressional committees.”.

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