

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 208

To amend title 18, United States Code, to protect the sanctity of religious communications.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 1997

Mr. KING introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To amend title 18, United States Code, to protect the sanctity of religious communications.

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 “Religious Communica-
5 tion Sanctity Act of 1997”.

6 **SEC. 2. PROTECTION OF SANCTITY OF RELIGIOUS COMMU-**
7 **NICATIONS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 13 of title 18, United
9 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the follow-
10 ing:

1 **“§ 249. Protection of sanctity of religious communica-**
2 **tions**

3 “(a) Whoever, under color of governmental authority,
4 surreptitiously listens to or records in any manner, any
5 communication that is privileged, because of its religious
6 character, under Federal law or under the non-Federal
7 law of the place where such communication takes place,
8 shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than
9 5 years, or both.

10 “(b) Any person aggrieved by a violation of this sec-
11 tion consisting of the recording of a communication may,
12 in a civil action, obtain the prompt destruction of that re-
13 cording and any copies or transcripts made from that re-
14 cording.”.

15 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
16 at the beginning of chapter 13 of title 18, United States
17 Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new
18 item:

“249. Protection of sanctity of religious communications.”.

