

## **H. Res. 423**

### ***In the House of Representatives, U.S.,***

*November 19, 2003.*

Whereas the people of the United States enjoy and respect the freedom of religion and believe that the fundamental rights of all individuals shall be recognized;

Whereas fundamental human rights, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, are protected in numerous international agreements and declarations;

Whereas religious freedom is a fundamental human right and all people are entitled to believe, practice, and worship according to their conscience;

Whereas the right to freedom of religion is expressed in the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 36/55 of November 22, 1981; the Helsinki Accords; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, done at New York on December 16, 1966, and entered into force March 23, 1976; the United Nations Charter; and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217(A)(III) of December 10, 1948;

Whereas the freedom for all individuals to adopt, believe, worship, observe, teach, and practice a religion individually or collectively has been explicitly articulated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

Whereas religious persecution is not confined to a country, a region, or a regime; but whereas all governments should provide and protect religious liberty;

Whereas much of the world's population is continually denied or restricted in the right to believe or practice their faith;

Whereas religious persecution often includes confinement, separation, humiliation, rape, enslavement, forced conversion, imprisonment, torture, and death;

Whereas October 27, 2003, marks the 5th anniversary of the signing of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.), creating the Office of International Religious Freedom in the Department of State and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and resulting in a greater awareness of religious persecution both in the United States and abroad; and

Whereas the United States recognizes the need for additional domestic and international attention and action to promote religious liberty: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 5th anniversary of the signing of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.); and

(2) urges a renewed commitment to eliminating violations of the internationally recognized right to freedom of religion and protecting fundamental human rights.

Attest:

*Clerk.*