to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 867

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 867, a bill to provide support for law enforcement agency efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

S. 870

At the request of Mr. WICKER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 870, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to implement Medicare payment policies designed to improve management of chronic disease, streamline care coordination, and improve quality outcomes without adding to the deficit.

S. 872

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 872, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make permanent the extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program and the increased payments under the Medicare low-volume hospital program.

S. 926

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 926, a bill to authorize the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to establish the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial as a commemorative work in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

S. 993

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 993, a bill to prohibit the Federal Communications Commission from reclassifying broadband Internet access service as a telecommunications service and from imposing certain regulations on providers of such service.

S. 1034

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1034, a bill to improve agricultural job opportunities, benefits, and security for aliens in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 1055

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1055, a bill to restrict the exportation of certain defense articles to the Philippine National Police, to work with the Philippines to support civil society and a public health approach to substance abuse, to report on Chinese and other sources of narcotics to the Republic of the Philippines, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 12

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 12, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that those who served in the bays, harbors, and territorial seas of the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, should be presumed to have served in the Republic of Vietnam for all purposes under the Agent Orange Act of 1991.

S. RES. 156

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 156, a resolution recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster-care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster-care system.

S. RES. 161

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 161, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that defense laboratories are on the cutting-edge of scientific and technological advancement, and supporting the designation of May 18, 2017, as ''Department of Defense Laboratory Day''.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DAINES:

S. 1097. A bill to postpone the deadline for the completion of the conversion of certain military technician (dual status) positions to positions of civilian employment by the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1097

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Armed Forces Reserve and National Guard Dual-Status Review and Modernization Act''.

SEC. 2. POSTPONEMENT OF DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF CONVERSION OF CERTAIN MILITARY TECHNICIAN (DUAL STATUS) POSITIONS TO POSITIONS OF CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) A September 2013 study conducted by a federally funded research and development center found that 21 percent of the military technician (dual status) positions are administrative in nature—the largest category as a percentage of military technician (dual status) positions. The study recommends investigation on whether ''some Dual Status MilTech positions supporting general administration functions could be converted to Title 5 Federal civilian full-time support positions without compromising unit readiness''. The study further recommends investigation on whether ''it is more appropriate to use military full-time support for other reasons (such as currency in military operations and training and augmentation)''.

(2) Section 1053 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 directs the conversion of not fewer than 20 percent of all military technician positions to positions of Federal civilian employment under title 5, United States Code, by January 1, 2017. Section 1084 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 extends the deadline for that conversion from January 1, 2017, to October 1, 2017.

(3) The Department of Defense submitted a report on the management of military technicians in December 2016 that finds that 12.6 percent of the military technician (dual status) positions were administrative in nature, and recommended a conversion of 4.8 percent of such positions to positions of Federal civilian employment.

(4) The Chief of the National Guard Bureau testified before Congress in April 2017 that a conversion of 20 percent of military technician (dual status) positions to positions of Federal civilian employment would degrade readiness, but that a lower number could be converted with minimal impact. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau also testified that the Department of Defense had not conducted an analysis of the associated costs and benefits of a conversion of 20 percent of military technician (dual status) positions to positions of Federal civilian employment.

(b) POSTPONEMENT OF DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF CONVERSION.—Notwithstanding the deadline otherwise specified in paragraph (1) of section 1053(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (10 U.S.C. 113 note) for the completion of the conversion of military technician positions as described in that subsection, the deadline for the completion of such conversion shall be 180 days after the date on which the Secretary of Defense transmits to Congress under paragraph (6) of subsection (c) the report of the working group required by paragraph (5) of that subsection.

(c) WORKING GROUP ON FULL TIME SUPPORT OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There shall be established in the Department of Defense a working group to be known as the ''Working Group on Full Time Support of the Reserve Components'' (in this subsection referred to as the ''working group'').

(2) CO-CHAIRS.—The co-chairs of the working group shall be the following:

(A) The Director of the Army National Guard.

(B) The Director of the Air National Guard.

(C) The Chief of the Army Reserve.

(D) The Chief of the Air Force Reserve.

(3) MEMBERS.—The members of the working group shall include the co-chairs of the working group and such other personnel of the Department of Defense as the Secretary shall appoint from among organizations and elements of the Department with an interest in full time support of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard Bureau and the Adjutants General of the States.

(4) DUTIES.—The working group shall undertake a comprehensive review of full time

support of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, including the following:

(A) An identification of the missions, purposes, and objectives of military technicians (dual status) in support of an operational reserve force.

(B) A review of the posture of current military technician (dual status) positions, and of their current role in meeting the objectives identified pursuant to subparagraph (A).

(C) An analysis of potential restructurings of the workforce of military technicians (dual status) in order to identify a restructuring that fully aligns military technician (dual status) positions with objectives for full time support of the reserve components.

(D) An identification of the military technician (dual status) positions whose conversion to positions of Federal civilian employment under title 5, United States Code, would best ensure the achievement of objectives for full time support of the reserve components.

(E) An assessment of the impact on the readiness of the National Guard for domestic operations of the conversion of positions identified pursuant to subparagraph (D) as described in that subparagraph.

(F) An assessment of costs and potential savings associated with the conversion of positions identified pursuant to subparagraph (D) as described in that subparagraph.

(5) REPORT TO SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the working group shall submit to the Secretary of Defense a report on the comprehensive review undertaken pursuant to paragraph (4). The report shall include the following:

(A) A comprehensive description of the review and the results of the review.

(B) The percentage of military technician (dual status) positions whose conversion to positions of Federal civilian employment under title 5, United States Code, would best ensure the achievement of objectives for full time support of the reserve components of the Armed Forces as an operational reserve.

(C) A transition plan for implementing a new force structure for full time support of the reserve components, including for the conversion of positions as described in subparagraph (B) which mitigates any risks to readiness identified pursuant to paragraph (4)(E).

(D) Recommendations for the reform of personnel management policy for military technician (dual status) positions that address—

(i) the eligibility of military technicians (dual status) for civilian retirement upon retirement from the Armed Forces; and

(ii) the process for appealing employment decisions.

(E) Recommendations for reforms of compensation and benefits policies for military technician (dual status) positions in order to provide military technicians (dual status) with parity in compensation and benefits with other Federal civilian employees of the Department of Defense under title 5, United States Code.

(6) TRANSMITTAL OF REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall transmit to the congressional defense committees the report of the working group under paragraph (5), together with such discussion and recommendations in connection with the report as the Secretary considers appropriate. The Secretary shall publish the report, and any such discussions and recommendations, in the Federal Register at the time of transmittal.

(7) CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ''congressional defense committees'' has the meaning given that term in section 101(a)(16) of title 10, United States Code.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, under current law, twenty-percent of our military dual-status technicians in the National Guard, Army Reserve, and Air Force Reserve will become federal civilians on October 1st. This will leave the state Governors to respond to wildfires, floods, and other natural disasters with twenty-percent fewer people. The benefits of this conversion are unclear. In fact, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau testified that no formal analysis has been conducted as to whether there is any benefit at all. It seems prudent to me to take a pause, bring all of the affected stakeholders together, and figure this problem out before we take any irreversible action. Today, I'm introducing the ''Armed Forces Reserve and National Guard Dual-Status Review and Modernization Act,'' to do exactly that.

As I've studied this situation, I understand there are a number of valid concerns involved. The current statutory construct for dual-status military technicians is nearly 50 years old and the role of the Reserve components has changed dramatically just in the past 15 years, let alone the last half-century. I agree we should update the statute to better meet the needs of the total force and my bill addresses this concern. Similarly, many Guardsmen and Reservists feel that personnel management practices under this aging construct doesn't fit the needs of a 21st century workforce. My bill addresses those concerns as well.

Most importantly, the bill ensures that there is no adverse impact to the Guard's ability to respond to domestic emergencies on October 1st, by postponing that date until Department of Defense leadership conducts a thorough, comprehensive review on the requirements of a 21st Century total force, and how our current structure should be aligned to meet those requirements. This will allow Congress to make an informed and measured judgement on how to update current law. I urge my colleagues to give this matter their full consideration and support.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 1113. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ensure the safety of cosmetics; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I am introducing a bill to improve the safety oversight of products that affect every single family on a daily basis. Whether it's shampoo or shaving cream, lotion or make-up, hair dye or deodorant, personal care products are a part of our everyday lives. I thank Senator COLLINS for her support and hard work on this important legislation.

However, even though our bodies absorb many chemicals in these products through our skin and even our nails, their ingredients are largely unregulated. It's time to modernize our safety oversight and correct this problem. Most people assume these products have up-to-date federal oversight, but in reality the Food and Drug Administration's authority to do so is sorely outdated—in fact, it's based on a law from the 1930s that has changed little over the past eight decades. There are questions about the safety of some ingredients in these products, which not only leads to health concerns but also causes uncertainty for companies working to innovate and expand domestically.

Over the last several years, Senator COLLINS and I have worked with a wide group of stakeholders that represent both industry and consumer groups. Those stakeholders include small and large companies, doctors, consumer advocates, patient advocates, scientists, and the Food and Drug Administration. Together, we have drafted bipartisan legislation that puts commonsense measures in place and has the support of both industry and consumer and health organizations.

The Personal Care Products Safety Act sets up a process for reviewing the safety of ingredients in personal care products. The bill requires manufacturers to register so consumers know who produces personal care products sold in the United States.

The legislation also modernizes authority for the Food and Drug Administration so the agency is better equipped to deal with public health concerns, such as being able to recall contaminated products if companies choose not to do so voluntarily. The updated system is completely paid for by industry fees. Companies will provide information about the ingredients in their products to the Food and Drug Administration, and attest to their safety. Many companies manufacturing in the United States currently follow strict voluntary standards for manufacturing under proper conditions, but the lack of federal standards leaves this to chance. Under this legislation, the agency sets Good Manufacturing Practice guidelines to ensure companies meet minimum requirements. Companies will also need to report adverse health events related to their products to the Food and Drug Administration.

Last year, we heard about WEN shampoo, a product that was causing significant hair loss. Among those affected were children, including a little girl named Eliana who lost all of her hair after using WEN. She shared her story with my office and several of my colleagues. What's shocking is that the company received more than 20,000 reports of this happening, but under current law WEN had no legal obligation to tell the Food and Drug Administration. Under this legislation, companies would be required to do so.

Another example of concern is the ongoing use of formaldehyde, also called methylene glycol when mixed with water, in the popular hair treatment called a Brazilian blowout. Formaldehyde is released into the air during

this beauty treatment. It can cause shortness of breath, headaches, and dizziness in the short-term. Over the long-term, formaldehyde has been linked to cancer.

I am also greatly concerned about the effect on the health of salon professionals who are constantly exposed to a variety of chemicals daily. In addition to reviewing the safety of chemicals they may be exposed to, this legislation also ensures that the salon products they use are properly labeled with ingredients and warnings.

The Food and Drug Administration will be required to evaluate at least five ingredients per year for safety and use in personal care products. In addition to reviewing the latest scientific and medical studies, the agency will consider how prevalent the ingredient is, the likely exposure, adverse event reports, and information from public comments. Public input will be critical to the review process. There will be opportunities for companies, scientists, consumer groups, medical professionals, and members of the public to weigh in on, not only the safety of particular ingredients but also, which ingredients should be a priority for review. After review, the Food and Drug Administration may deem an ingredient safe, unsafe, or safe under certain uses or under certain conditions. The agency will also have the authority to require warning labels as needed for certain ingredients and limit the amount of an ingredient that may be used in personal care products. For example, some ingredients may only be safe for use by adults or when used by professionals in a salon or spa setting.

The Personal Care Products Safety Act is the result of many diverse groups working together with the common goal of modernizing the federal oversight system to ensure the safest products possible are on the market. We have worked closely with small businesses to ensure that the legislation recognizes their needs and supports their growth. This legislation incorporates changes to increase flexibility for small businesses, particularly those making low-risk products. The bill recognizes the unique nature of the handmade cosmetic industry and meets their needs to encourage growth and innovation.

I am pleased that the major organizations representing these small businesses (Handmade Cosmetic Alliance, Coalition of Handcrafted Entrepreneurs, Handcrafted Soap and Cosmetic Guild), have said that the provisions within this legislation ''afford producers in the handmade cosmetic industry the opportunity to continue to innovate, grow, create jobs and produce safe, quality handmade products in communities across the nation.''

I am pleased to have the support of a broad coalition, including Environmental Working Group, Society for Women's Health Research, Endocrine Society, National Alliance for Hispanic Health, Au Naturale, Coalition of Handcrafted Entrepreneurs, Handcrafted Soap and Cosmetic Guild, Handmade Cosmetic Alliance, Herban Lifestyle, The Honest Company, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Babo Botanicals, Goddess Garden Organics, Caregiver Action Network, March of Dimes, EO Products, Eclair Naturals, Juice Beauty, National Psoriasis Foundation, and the following major companies that together represent over 99 brands of products: The Estee Lauder Companies, Johnson and Johnson, Procter and Gamble, Revlon, Unilever, and L'Oreal.

I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this much needed legislation to modernize our outdated regulatory system for personal care products, and I hope the Senate will pass this long overdue legislation this year.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COONS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 1114. A bill to nullify the effect of the recent Executive order laying a foundation for discrimination against LGBTQ individuals, women, religious minorities, and others under the pretext of religious freedom; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President. I rise today to join with my colleagues in introducing a rescission bill to nullify President Trump's Executive Order 13798, titled ''Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty.'' Unfortunately, this Executive Order does not live up to its title. Instead, it furthers the aim of this administration to diminish critical protections for women, minorities, and LGBT Americans.

I am deeply troubled by Section 3 of the Order, which paves the way for the Trump administration to roll back protections to preventive health services under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), especially for women and LGBT individuals. Through new regulations issued pursuant to this Order, companies could use ''conscience-based'' objections to deny their employees coverage for preventive services that they have a right to under the ACA. This means that because of their employers' moral objection, women could lose access to contraception, and those in the LGBT community could lose access to essential services, including cancer screenings or counseling for domestic violence.

I respect that we all have religious and moral convictions, but it is wrong to put employers' religious views above individuals' rights to access basic health care. I also note that this section of the Order invites members of the President's Cabinet to eliminate an accommodation President Obama administration made allowing religiously affiliated nonprofit employers, including large universities and hospital systems, to opt out of providing their employees with contraception coverage based on religious objections.

Importantly, women working for objecting employers can receive contraception coverage directly through their insurance companies. Seven federal courts of appeals have upheld this accommodation in the face of religiously based challenges. But with this Order, the President signals that his administration is likely to do away with the accommodation, which would deny contraception access to women whose bosses want to make this important and intimate decision for them.

The Order also directs the Attorney General to issue guidance to all agencies on ''religious liberty protections in Federal law.'' This language is concerning as it opens the door for the Attorney General to eliminate protections in federal rules and regulations for LGBT individuals and minorities. The Attorney General's duty is to enforce and protect the civil rights and constitutional freedoms of all Americans. This Order's direction for guidance that could change the implementation of critical rules affording equal treatment for all in America is a disturbing step backward. For example, there are rules protecting same-sex spouses' ability to visit their partners in the hospital and ensuring that LGBT individuals have equal access to federally funded emergency housing. Under this provision, however, new religious exemptions may be implemented to weaken these protections. Shelters could turn LGBT families away because of who they love. As the Human Rights Campaign has described, this provision opens the door to a ''license to discriminate'' even where basic services funded with government dollars are at stake.

This Executive Order opens the door to weakening the enforcement of longstanding tax laws against individuals, houses of worship, and other religious organizations engaging in political campaign speech. Notably, the Johnson Amendment was proposed by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1954 and is part of our tax code. It prohibits 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entities, including churches, from engaging in political campaign activity on behalf of candidates. The Johnson Amendment does not bar nonpartisan voter education and registration activities, which are important to a strong democracy, nor does it prohibit speech on moral issues.

The President has promised to repeal the Johnson Amendment. Doing so could have a significant impact on political campaign fundraising and would change the current tax consideration for certain political contributions. While repeal of the Johnson Amendment is something only Congress has the power to do, this Executive Order clearly indicates the administration's intention to undermine the separation

between tax-exempt charities and religious organizations and political campaign activity in the tax code.

It remains to be seen whether the President and the administration will implement this Order in ways that will realize our worst fears about the kind of discrimination it could enable. But we know for certain that this Order represents a disturbing statement of principles and values. Instead of seeking even greater protections from discrimination, this administration has set the stage to undermine protections, especially for women and LGBT individuals. That is not what our country stands for.

Mr. President, I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the bill I am introducing today to nullify this troubling Executive Order.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 162—REAFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROMOTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 162

Whereas the United States Congress has a proud history of promoting internationally recognized human rights;

Whereas religious freedom is a fundamental human right of all people;

Whereas the free exercise of religion must stand for the right to practice any faith or to choose no faith at all;

Whereas every individual's rights to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is guaranteed under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted at Paris December 10, 1948, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted at New York December 16, 1966, which recognize, ''Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.'';

Whereas, during his 1941 State of the Union address, President Franklin D. Roosevelt noted the ''Four Freedoms'' that the world should be founded upon, including the ''freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world'';

Whereas, according to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), abuses committed by governments and non-state actors has increased and the incarceration of prisoners of conscience remains widespread;

Whereas, according to the latest Pew Research Center's Study of Global Restrictions on Religion, which surveyed 2015, an estimated 79 percent of the world's population lives in countries where freedom of religion and conscience is highly restricted, either by the government or social groups;

Whereas the 2017 report produced by USCIRF recommended that the Department of State designate the following countries as Countries of Particular Concern: Burma, Central African Republic, China, Eritrea, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam;

Whereas, in the same report, USCIRF categorized as Tier 2 violators, meaning violations engaged in or tolerated by the government are serious and characterized by at least one of the elements of the 'systematic, ongoing, and egregious' Country of Particular Concern standard, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia, and Turkey;

Whereas USCIRF also recommended that the Department of State designate the following non-state actors as entities of particular concern: the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Taliban in Afghanistan, and al-Shabaab in Somalia;

Whereas, according to the Pew Research Center Study, the two geographic regions with the highest government restrictions continue to be the Middle East-North Africa and the Asia-Pacific;

Whereas Congress has recognized that Christians, Yezidis, Shi'a, Turkmen, Shabak, Sabean-Mandeans, Kaka'i, and other religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria have faced genocide and other crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and that ISIL seeks to eradicate the communities of these minorities;

Whereas Egyptian Coptic Christians have been repeatedly targeted and their aggressors have gone unprosecuted, including two suicide bombings conducted by ISIL that killed 44 people at Coptic churches on Palm Sunday 2017 and an attack in December 2016 that killed 29 and injured numerous other Coptic worshipers, many of whom were women and children;

Whereas, according to USCIRF, Rohingya Muslims and other religious and ethnic minorities, including Christians, in Burma have faced ongoing persecution from state and non-state actors for decades, including incidents of intimidation and violence; the forced relocation and destruction of religious sites; violent attacks by mobs and the military; sexual violence and trafficking in persons, and an ongoing campaign of coerced conversion to Buddhism;

Whereas, according to USCIRF's most recent annual report, conditions for freedom of religion or belief in China continue to decline, with authorities targeting anyone considered a threat to the state, including religious believers, and Chinese authorities arrested Christians for displaying the cross in their homes and printing religious materials, threatened parents for bringing their children to church, and blocked them from holding certain religious activities;

Whereas, according to USCIRF, the Government of Eritrea continues to target Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses, suppresses the religious activities of Muslims, dominates the internal affairs of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Eritrea, and has engaged in the torture of religious prisoners;

Whereas apostasy and blasphemy laws are routinely used across the Middle East and North Africa to intimidate and punish minority faiths and those who would leave Islam;

Whereas, according to Human Rights Watch, in Pakistan, Christians, Hindus, and Ahmadis are often the victims of violent extremists; forced conversion and marriage of Christian and Hindu girls and young women remains a systemic problem; and blasphemy laws are often used as an excuse to settle personal scores or stir up religious animosity against marginalized religious minorities, resulting in a climate of fear and a chilling effect on religious expression;

Whereas, according to the Department of State's 2015 International Religious Freedom Report, the Government of Iran continues to repress religious minorities, including Baha'is, Christians, Sunnis, Sufis, Yarsanis, and Zoroastrians, by raiding religious gatherings services, arresting and imprisoning worshipers and religious leaders, imprisoning educators, confiscating properties, and executing dissidents;

Whereas, according to the Department of State's 2015 International Religious Freedom Report, the Government of Sudan has systematically targeted the Christian community, prosecuting Christian pastors on trumped-up charges, confiscating Christian-owned properties, banning the construction of new Christian houses of worship, destroying numerous religious facilities throughout the country, and targeting human rights defenders for legally representing the Christian community;

Whereas, according to the February 2014 report of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on the Human Rights Situation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), there is ''an almost complete denial of the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion,''and the Government of the DPRK ''considers the spread of Christianity a particularly serious threat'' and enforces severe punishments for the practice of Christianity;

Whereas the global religious freedom crisis we are experiencing today has created millions of victims and undermines liberty, prosperity, and peace in places vital to United States national interests—posing direct challenges to United States interests in the Middle East, Russia, China, and sub-Saharan Africa;

Whereas the absence of fundamental human rights, including religious freedom, contributes to persecution of minorities, religious extremism, terrorism, and instability;

Whereas there is greater peace, political and social stability, economic development, democratization, and women's empowerment when human rights, including religious freedom, are protected and advanced; and

Whereas Congress recently recognized, with broad bipartisan support, in the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act (Public Law 114–281), enacted on December 16, 2016, that because the promotion of international religious freedom protects human rights, advances democracy abroad, and advances United States interests in stability, security, and development globally, the promotion of international religious freedom requires new and evolving policies, and diplomatic responses that are drawn from the expertise of the national security agencies, the diplomatic services, and other governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations, and are coordinated across and carried out by the entire range of Federal agencies: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to promoting religious freedom as a fundamental human right and calls on the President and the Secretary of State, in accordance with the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–292), as amended by the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act (Public Law 114–281), to strengthen United States foreign policy on behalf of individuals persecuted in foreign countries on account of religion;

(2) calls on the President, the Secretary of State, and the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom to develop an action plan on international religious