

S. RES. 463

Whereas, on October 10, 2025, international news outlets reported that the Chinese Communist Party (referred to in this preamble as the “CCP”) detained Pastor “Ezra” Jin Mingri, who is the founder of Zion Church, from his home in Guangxi Province, China;

Whereas CCP authorities also arrested nearly 30 other pastors and church members from Zion Church;

Whereas 23 members of Zion Church remain in detention centers, while other members have been released on bail, and still others are being harassed and intimidated by Chinese authorities;

Whereas the CCP’s actions mark the largest coordinated, nationwide crackdown against an unregistered Christian house church network in more than 40 years;

Whereas thousands of Zion Church members and millions of Christians and other religious adherents who reside in the People’s Republic of China seek to peacefully worship God and care for their neighbors without the threat or fear of persecution;

Whereas the imprisonment of Pastor Jin is the latest instance of CCP persecution of a large number of religious minorities, including Christians, Muslim Uyghurs, Hui Muslims, and Tibetan Buddhists;

Whereas, since coming to power in 2012, CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping has escalated a campaign to “sinicize” religion in China by—

(1) allowing authorities to burn bibles, imprison believers, and tear down Christian crosses; and

(2) forcing religious organizations and adherents to conform to the ideology of the CCP;

Whereas, under the policy of sinicizing religion, the Government of China has—

(1) ordered the removal of crosses from Catholic and Protestant churches;

(2) censored religious texts;

(3) imposed CCP-approved religious materials;

(4) replaced images of Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary with pictures of Xi Jinping; and

(5) instructed clergy to preach CCP ideology;

Whereas, in 2021, the Trump administration determined the CCP—

(1) had committed crimes against humanity and genocide against predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups, including ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Kyrgyz; and

(2) has continued to subject religious minority groups in China to restrictions on religious practices and freedom of expression, arbitrary imprisonment, forced sterilization torture, and forced labor;

Whereas the CCP has made consistent efforts to erode the religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of Tibetans, including by—

(1) closing Buddhist monasteries and limiting entry or practitioners;

(2) forcibly disappearing and arbitrarily detaining Tibetans for practicing their religious beliefs;

(3) censoring religious content online; and

(4) expanding the use of boarding schools to indoctrinate children in CCP-approved curricula and Mandarin Chinese;

Whereas Congress unanimously passed the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-292), which established, as the official policy of the United States—

(1) to condemn violations of religious freedom;

(2) to promote, and assist other governments in the promotion of, the fundamental right to freedom of religion;

(3) to stand for liberty and with the persecuted;

(4) to use and implement appropriate tools in the United States foreign policy appa-

ratus, including diplomatic, political, commercial, charitable, educational, and cultural channels; and

(5) to promote respect for religious freedom by all governments and peoples;

Whereas, under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has designated the People’s Republic of China as a “country of particular concern for religious freedom” every year since 1999;

Whereas Congress unanimously passed the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act (Public Law 114-281) in 2016 to enhance the capabilities of the United States to advance religious liberty globally through diplomacy, training, counterterrorism, and foreign assistance;

Whereas the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (subtitle F of title XII of Public Law 114-328), enacted by Congress in 2016, gives the President the authority to impose targeted sanctions on individuals responsible for committing human rights violations;

Whereas the People’s Republic of China is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in Paris on December 10, 1948, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted in New York on December 19, 1966, which recognize freedom of religion as an internationally-recognized human right;

Whereas Article 36 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China explicitly states that citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief; and

Whereas the United States must show strong international leadership when it comes to the advancement of religious freedoms, liberties, and protections: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) strongly condemns the Chinese Communist Party’s persecution of religious minority groups, including Pastor “Ezra” Jin Mingri and other leaders and members of Zion Church and other faith communities;

(2) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to promote religious freedom and tolerance around the world and to help provide protection and relief to religious minorities facing persecution and violence;

(3) calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained members of Zion Church, including Pastor Jin, and all other wrongfully detained religious practitioners in China;

(4) calls for the Government of the People’s Republic of China to cease its harassment and intimidation of the relatives of Zion Church members and their relatives, including tactics of transnational repression overseas;

(5) calls on the Government of the People’s Republic of China to release all other arbitrarily detained religious believers, including Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, and other Christians; and

(6) demands that the Government of the People’s Republic of China—

(A) respect the internationally recognized human right to freedom of religion or belief; and

(B) end all forms of violence and discrimination against religious minority groups and entities.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

MEDAL OF HONOR ACT

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I rise today to honor a very special group of Americans—the soldiers, the sailors,

the marines, and the airmen who have fought bravely for this Nation, but who have received the very highest distinction that any member of the Armed Forces can earn, the Medal of Honor.

Since 1863, Presidents of the United States have awarded the Medal of Honor to more than 3,500 of the bravest men and women ever to wear the uniform of this Nation. Each one has demonstrated valor, gallantry, and heroism above and beyond the call of duty, with acts so selfless, so extraordinary that they stand as beacons of courage for future generations.

In 1960, Congress passed Public Law 6556, establishing the Army and Navy Medal of Honor Roll and entitling each Medal of Honor recipient to a modest special pension of \$10 per month for life.

Over time, that monthly amount has gradually increased from \$10 to \$100, to what stands today at approximately \$1,400 per month.

But let’s pause and think about that: \$1,400 a month for those who risked everything—their safety, their future, their very lives for freedom, for the opportunity for all of us to be here today.

Today, there are 61 living Medal of Honor recipients, 61 men who faced unthinkable odds, who put their country before themselves so that the rest of us could live in peace. We cannot truly ever repay them. There is no sum, there is no medal, there are no words that can measure up to their sacrifice. But there are ways that we can continue to honor them, by ensuring that they are cared for, respected, and supported.

In January of this year, I introduced the Medals Act, my legislation to raise the monthly pension for Medal of Honor recipients. This legislation is a way for this Nation to say: We see you, we remember you, and we will not forget what you have done.

Many of these heroes spend their time traveling the country, speaking to schoolchildren, visiting military hospitals, and strengthening the very fabric of America.

This monetary increase will allow them to continue those efforts and to reach more communities, mentor more veterans, and remind all of us about the cost of freedom.

And I would like to take a moment to recognize nine Medal of Honor recipients who currently live in the Lone Star State. We honor them, and we cherish them.

I would also like to recognize the 139 Medal of Honor recipients who were either born in, entered the service from, or died in Texas. These are America’s heroes, and they are heroes for the great State of Texas.

Now, I would like to take a moment to recognize the Medal of Honor recipients here in the Gallery: LTC William Swenson and COL Paris Davis.

In just a moment, I will propound a unanimous consent request to take up and pass H.R. 695, the House-passed version of the Medal Act that passed

the House 424 to 0. I urge my colleagues to join me, as our companions in the House have already done, in supporting this measure, in passing it into law, in sending it directly to the President's desk to be signed into law, and showing that, when it comes to honoring our Nation's very greatest heroes, we are united, and we speak with one voice.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 695, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 695) to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the rate of the special pension payable to Medal of Honor recipients, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CRUZ. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 695) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. CRUZ. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, I came to the floor in support of a bill that we were going to vote on, a motion to proceed called the Shutdown Fairness Act. It is a pretty simple bill. The name pretty well describes exactly what it is. It is trying to be fair during these dysfunctional shutdowns. Any of the Federal workers who are forced to work because they are in our military, they are in Federal law enforcement, they are TSA, or they are air traffic controllers—they are keeping this Nation and Americans safe—if we are going to force them to work, at a minimum, let's make sure we pay them and pay them on time.

I came down in as nonpartisan a manner as I possibly could and literally begged the other side to just join us, vote to proceed to the bill.

They had some objections to it, things that I was willing to address. For example, my bill only addressed workers that were forced to work. They wanted to include furloughed

workers. I said on the floor: I am happy to add that as an amendment. I think, working with my conference, I can get the conference to support it as well.

It wasn't quite that easy, but in the end, we overcame objections within our conference to adding furloughed workers.

So we have completely amended the bill now. We have added furloughed workers.

In the meantime, surprising to me, we had Federal employee worker unions reach out to us, asking what they could do to help pass this bill. They are sick and tired of being used as pawns in this political dysfunction here. They are tired of it.

One of the things that definitely appealed to them once I added the furloughed workers was that my bill makes it permanent. My bill says: We will never use you again as a pawn in the political gamesmanship that is being played out right now.

I am happy to report that the Shutdown Fairness Act, as I now amended it by adding furloughed workers, is supported by the American Federation of Government Employees, the Federal Managers Association, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association.

We tragically had a plane go down early in the week. I am not saying it is because of air traffic control, but we understand the danger. We have to understand the risks we are taking in not paying air traffic controllers so we can fully man our air towers and keep our airspace safe.

The International Association of Fire Fighters supports my bill. The Association of Flight Attendants does.

Again, one of the main reasons they support my bill is, in addition to the fact that we added furloughed workers, my bill makes this permanent.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 191, S. 3012. I further ask that the Johnson substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I just want to first start off and say that I deeply appreciate that Senator JOHNSON has updated his proposal to pay all Federal employees during the shutdown, to include furloughed workers as well as DC employees. I appreciate all his efforts.

I have worked on a number of bills with the Senator from Wisconsin. We would like to continue to work on this bill as well as we go forward. But, unfortunately, I still have some concerns about the way that the bill has been drafted so far. Those are things that I think we can work out and want to

work out. We have been going back and forth with our staff.

I am concerned that Senator JOHNSON's bill still leaves too much discretion up to President Trump. There is too much wiggle room for the administration to basically pick and choose which Federal employees are paid and when.

I am also deeply concerned that this would allow the administration to actually transfer this money to other purposes that are unintended by Congress, which, unfortunately, we have seen happen repeatedly in this administration.

I believe there are ways that we can put in guardrails. There are ways we can get to that, but we are just not there yet. I certainly ask indulgence from my colleague from Wisconsin. We sent another proposal over to his staff. We can work on this quickly and try to figure out how we get there.

In the meantime, I have also introduced a bill that would pay Federal employees just for this shutdown, without the additional powers sent to the administration. It is basically a clean bill—no additional language, no complications, no wondering, what does this actually mean? It is very straightforward.

My Military and Federal Employee Protection Act would ensure that all Federal employees receive the pay they certainly deserve, allowing them to pay their bills on time this month.

I have asked Senator JOHNSON to support my very simple proposal, which I think accomplishes most everything he wants to do, with the exception of things about giving the administration more power. I think we can agree on that. We can pay our troops and our Federal employees, period. That would be my goal.

I will continue to work to this end and to work to end this government shutdown and address the healthcare crisis, but in the meantime, we must protect our hard-working Federal employees.

My bill is very straightforward. We could agree to that right now, and it is done. Federal employees are going to get paid without all the other extraneous language in the Senator's bill.

Therefore, I ask that the Senator modify his request so that, instead, the Appropriations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 3043 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Wisconsin so modify his request?

Mr. JOHNSON. Reserving the right to object, it is important that the American public understand what is going on here.

Again, I came down here 2 weeks ago. I modified my bill quite dramatically. We entered talks immediately with the