

Public Law 114–71
114th Congress

An Act

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

Oct. 16, 2015
[S. 2078]

*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 “United States Commission on
International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of the Congress that the United States Commis-
sion on International Religious Freedom—

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

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

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.

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

SEC. 4. STRATEGIC PLAN.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—The term
“appropriate congressional committees” means—

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

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

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

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

(2) **COMMISSION.**—The term “Commission” means the
United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
established under section 201 of the International Religious
Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6431).

(3) **COMMISSIONER.**—The term “Commissioner” means a
member of the Commission.

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

United States
Commission on
International
Religious
Freedom
Reauthorization
Act of 2015.
22 USC 6401
note.
22 USC 6432
note.

22 USC 6433a.

from the political party of the elected official who appointed the Chair of the Commission.

Deadlines.

(b) STRATEGIC POLICY AND ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW PLANNING PROCESS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than biennially thereafter, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission, in coordination with the Commissioners, the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Commission staff, and others jointly selected by the Chair and Vice Chair, shall carry out a strategic policy and organizational review planning process that includes—

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

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

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

(4) a review of the personnel policies set forth in section 204 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432b) and any required changes to such policies.

(c) UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To the greatest extent possible, the Chair, Vice Chair, and all of the Commissioners shall ensure that this section is implemented in a manner that results in unanimous agreement among the Commissioners with regard to—

(A) the strategic policy and organizational review planning process required under subsection (b); and

(B) the strategic plan required under subsection (d).

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

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

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

Deadlines.

(d) SUBMISSION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Act, and not less frequently than biennially thereafter, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission shall jointly submit, to the appropriate congressional committees, a written strategic plan that includes—

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

(2) a description of any changes the Commission considers necessary with regard to the scope, content, and timing of the Commission’s annual report;

(3) a description of any changes the Commission considers necessary with regard to personnel matters; and

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

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

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

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

(1) make available for inspection any information and documents requested by the appropriate congressional committees; and

(2) respond to any requests to provide testimony before the appropriate congressional committees.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 207 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6435) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 207. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

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

“(b) **AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.**—Amounts authorized to be appropriated under subsection (a) shall remain available until the earlier of—

“(1) the date on which they have been expended; or

“(2) the date on which the Commission is terminated under section 209.

“(c) **LIMITATION.**—In each fiscal year, the Commission shall only be authorized to expend amounts that have been appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) if the Commission—

“(1) complies with the requirements set forth in section 4 of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2015; and

“(2) submits the annual financial report required under section 208(e) to the appropriate congressional committees.”.

Approved October 16, 2015.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 2078:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 161 (2015):

Sept. 30, considered and passed Senate.

Oct. 6, considered and passed House.