

November 21, 2003: House Recognizes IRFA 5th Anniversary

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WASHINGTON - The U. S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) commends the House of Representatives for passing, and Representative Frank Wolf for introducing, House Resolution 423 recognizing the 5th anniversary of the signing of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) and urging a renewed commitment to eliminating violations of the internationally recognized right to freedom of religion and protecting fundamental human rights. The Commission also commends the Senate for passing, and Senator Sam Brownback for introducing, in October Senate Resolution 251 designating October 27, 2003, as "International Religious Freedom Day." The legislation also requests that the President issue a proclamation calling for a renewed commitment to eliminating violations of the internationally recognized right to freedom of religion and protecting fundamental human rights, and calling upon the people of the United States and interested groups and organizations to observe International Religious Freedom Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. "This legislation will help to keep religious freedom at the forefront of foreign policy," said USCIRF Chair Michael K. Young. "Freedom of thought, conscience and religion protects everyone's choice in what many believe to be the most important and deeply-held aspect of human identity. It requires governments to respect manifestations of that choice, and to protect each individual from harassment or violence on account of that choice. It is one of the first freedoms restricted by authoritarian and repressive governments who would replace individual conscience with unquestioned loyalty to the state. Advancing respect for the internationally-guaranteed right to freedom of religion serves U.S. interests to promote stable, democratic governments around the world."

Dean Michael K. Young, Chair

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