

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2022

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3895) to extend and authorize annual appropriations for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom through fiscal year 2024.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3895

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 2022”.

SEC. 2. UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 207(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6435(a)) is amended by striking “2019 through 2022” and inserting “2023 and 2024”.

(b) EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION.—Section 209 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6436) is amended by striking “September 30, 2022” and inserting “September 30, 2024”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MALINOWSKI) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MALINOWSKI).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 3895.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2022. I thank our Senate colleagues and Mr. SMITH and Ms. ESHOO for their leadership in advancing this important measure—in Mr. SMITH’s case, his leadership over many, many years in advancing the cause of religious freedom across the world.

Since 1998, USCIRF has served as a leading advisory panel to the United

States Government on matters related to religious freedom globally. It is responsible for monitoring the freedom of religion or belief abroad and for making policy recommendations to the President, Secretary of State, and to Congress.

The past several USCIRF reauthorizations have been bipartisan and faithful to the original mandate as established by Congress.

Mr. Speaker, the right to practice a religion, or to practice no religion, is a fundamental human right. The principle of religious liberty should extend to all people, not only ones who come from a specific set of religious beliefs. As respect for democracy and human rights continue to be under stress in many parts of the world, the work of USCIRF and other human rights groups to shine a light on religious freedom is even more important.

I thank Chairman MEEKS and Ranking Member MCCAUL for moving this legislation forward in a bipartisan way. The bill will enhance the Commission’s ability to continue its important work promoting religious freedom and to highlight those countries around the world that have to do better.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge all Members to vote in support of the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill, S. 3895, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I and my good friend and colleague, ANNA ESHOO, have worked together on many religious freedom issues over the many years and have introduced the House companion bill to the Senate bill before us to authorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

It is both timely and essential that we pass this legislation. Timely, because USCIRF’s authorization runs out at the end of this month; and essential, because the cause of religious freedom is under sustained and escalating threat around the globe, particularly in the world’s remaining communist dictatorships, from Cuba to Vietnam to North Korea to Iran, and to the world’s largest oppressor of religious freedom in the world today, the People’s Republic of China under Xi Jinping.

Indeed, just today, we see that the great defender for religious liberty, 90-year-old Cardinal Joseph Zen, has been put on trial in Hong Kong, a city-state which was once a bastion of freedom, but which now sadly has buckled to the dictates of Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party. All of us here in Congress and the White House need to raise our voices in defense of Cardinal Zen.

Sadly, we also need to add to that list of oppressors Nicaragua, where Comandante Daniel Ortega has reestablished his Sandinista dictatorship along communist lines and is waging a relentless war against the Catholic Church, the one institution which has

consistently stood up for freedom throughout his tenure of abuse.

I would note parenthetically that I met with Ortega in 1984 on a human rights trip with Tony Hall and Frank Wolf, and the man is back. He has been back for a number of years, and his proclivity toward dictatorial rule, imprisoning the very people who run against him—I held a hearing earlier this year with the wives of two of the opponents for him in the general election. What does he do? It was with their wives, and they were very articulate, very passionate, very courageous in speaking out for their husbands. But Ortega says, “I don’t like what you are doing; I don’t like that you are running against me,” so he throws them in prison, and they are still in prison. And his oppression of the church has reached new lows as we speak.

Mr. Speaker, USCIRF also calls attention to other issues around the world, including whether you are a Christian or a Muslim or you happen to be Jewish or happen to be a member of a lesser-known faith, such as Baha’i or Falun Gong, USCIRF reports—I encourage everyone to go to their website and read their reports. They are fact-filled, they are very persuasive, based on all these kinds of investigations. The human rights NGOs all feed information to them about what is going on. They talk to the State Department, but they are really a good check on the State Department in terms of getting it right.

That is particularly true when it comes to designating certain countries to be CPC countries, countries of particular concern. Unfortunately, the State Department has a less-than-stellar record of picking and choosing and giving passing grades artificially to some countries that ought to be on the CPC designation, which is the worst violator and, therefore, susceptible to sanctioning by the United States Government.

As a matter of fact, this just happened with regards to Nigeria, where USCIRF accurately labeled Nigeria a top-tier violator of religious freedom while the State Department gave it an unwarranted upgrade right before the Secretary of State went to Abuja to meet with the President there.

We should have said to the President of Nigeria, President Buhari: “You have got to clean up your act. The killing of Christians, of churches, houses of worship and schools, has to come to an end.” Some of it he can’t stop, but the response could be far better for much of it. Unfortunately, there is serious allegations of aiding and abetting, particularly with Fulani, the killing of Christians there.

I would also point out to my colleagues that Nury Turkel, who is the Chairman of the Board of USCIRF, was born, of all places, in a Chinese detention center during the cultural revolution. He has been a leader on behalf of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, as my colleagues on both sides of the aisle

know—we all know it—they are committing genocide. Now, we have walking point of USCIRF, a man who was actually born in a detention center, and he has been articulate and strong.

Last week, in the China Commission, which I serve as ranking member, when he testified, he just hit it out of the park in terms of good, factual information, persuasive, what next to do, with regards to that genocide and other concerns of all religious faiths that are being oppressed by the Chinese Communist Party.

I will end by saying that it is this great Commission that keeps speaking out so boldly about de-Sinicization of all religions in China. That means they all comport with Xi Jinping's etiology. Whether you are Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, Uyghur, or Falun Gong, they are breathing down your neck and putting people in prisons if they do not adhere and comport with Xi Jinping's mandates.

Frank Wolf is now a member of the Commission, and I congratulate him on that. Here is the guy that wrote the law in 1998, the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. We had real opposition to it. I was one of his cosponsors, and I put together a number of hearings in my committee where the bill first originated. But it was Frank who was the absolute champion, and we named the 2016 act after him to honor the champion work that he is doing, the life-changing work across the globe.

I thank Frank for his tenacious defense of religious freedom of all people.

Mr. Speaker, USCIRF needs to be reauthorized. I thank my colleague, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, S. 3895, the USCIRF Reauthorization Act, is critically needed to ensure that our country maintains the tools we need to stand up for human rights and, in particular, religious freedom around the world.

I thank my friend from New Jersey, once again, for encouraging us to move on this and really for being the conscience of the House on these issues for so many, many years.

I remember many times testifying before you back in the day, and I am glad that you are still reminding us that this is some of the most important work that we can do.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me and support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MALINOWSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3895.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

READ ACT REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2022

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7240) to reauthorize the READ Act, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7240

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 "READ Act Reauthorization Act of 2022".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 4(a) of the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development Act (division A of Public Law 115-56; 22 U.S.C. 2151c note) is amended by striking "during the following five fiscal years" and inserting "during the following ten fiscal years".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MALINOWSKI) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 7240, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7240, the reauthorization of the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development, or the READ Act. I would first like to thank my colleagues, Representative BASS and Representative SMITH, for their leadership in this legislation. I also want to acknowledge former Appropriations Chairwoman LOWEY for championing basic education programs for so many years in the House. The READ Act is just one piece of her great legacy.

The bill we are considering today reauthorizes the READ Act for another 5 years, continuing our country's leadership in expanding access to basic education for kids around the world. As Chairwoman LOWEY would say, education is one of the greatest force multipliers in foreign aid. Every dollar we spend on a child's education is an investment in their future and in a more peaceful and prosperous world.

□ 1500

Since the READ Act was signed into law in 2017, we have made significant progress in responding to the needs of

our partner countries to improve literacy, strengthen education systems, expand access to safe learning, and promote education as a foundation for sustained economic growth.

Despite this progress, the READ Act and our basic education programs remain critical in the face of profound learning loss everywhere due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning poverty has increased by a third in low- and middle-income countries, with an estimated 70 percent of 10-year-olds unable to understand a simple written text, up from 57 percent before the pandemic.

According to the World Bank, this generation of students now risks losing \$21 trillion in potential lifetime earnings, or the equivalent of 17 percent of the world's GDP. Millions of kids around the world remain out of school.

Children need a quality education, whether in Bethesda, Nairobi, or Kabul. But investing U.S. taxpayer dollars in this cause is not just charity; it is in our collective interest. Reauthorizing the READ Act is thus a step toward maintaining U.S. leadership in achieving this goal, and I urge my colleagues to support its passage through the House.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the READ Act reauthorization, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Ms. BASS), my good friend and colleague, for championing this effort. I am proud to be the Republican lead on this bill. There are 50-plus cosponsors on it. It is a bipartisan bill that seeks to encourage and strengthen our efforts at education overseas.

Mr. Speaker, investment in basic education is an investment in the prosperity and the security of the next generation and the communities they live in, and that applies both at home and abroad.

Without the opportunity to attend school and learn how to read and write, children around the world are falling behind and are more vulnerable to extremism, violence, and exploitation.

In the Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights Subcommittee, Ms. BASS and I—when I was chairman of the committee and now she as chair—have held a number of hearings about this challenge of helping these children so they can have good lives, care for their families, and be as well read and as well positioned in their communities as humanly possible.

That is why the United States is a leader in this sector. The United States provides \$950 million to partner countries to support basic education around the world, making strategic investments in improving educational access, quality, and teacher training.

While important gains have been made, COVID-19 had a devastating impact on learners, both in the United States and around the world. We all