

Whereas religious minorities face harassment, intimidation, violence, and imprisonment from state and non-state actors around the world, including in—

(1) Afghanistan, where the Taliban has rigorously enforced its harsh interpretation of Shari'a law that violates the freedom of religion or belief of religious minorities, including Christians, Ahmadiyya Muslims, Baha'is, and nonbelievers who face imprisonment or death if discovered;

(2) Burma, where in addition to violence targeted at religious minorities, strict laws in favor of the Buddhist majority regulate religious conversion, marriages, and births of non-Buddhists such as Muslims and Christians;

(3) China, where the government utilizes targeted surveillance to monitor, harass, and detain Christians, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghur Muslims, and other religious minorities for exercising their beliefs;

(4) Cuba, where the government subjects religious leaders and groups that are unregistered through its Office of Religious Affairs to detention, interrogation, imprisonment, and confiscation of property;

(5) India, where laws promoting religiously discriminatory policies, including laws that target religious conversion, interfaith relationships, the wearing of hijabs, and cow slaughter, have been implemented at the national, state, and local levels and negatively impact the livelihoods of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, and Adivasis;

(6) Iran, where the government disproportionately subjects members of religious minorities such as Baha'is, Christians, Gonabadi Dervishes, and Sunni Muslims to amputations, floggings, detention, harassment, surveillance, executions, and exile;

(7) Nicaragua, where the government arbitrarily detains and exiles religious clerics and leaders who advocate for the rights of religious minorities and criticize the government's persecution of the Roman Catholic Church;

(8) Nigeria, where the government's enforcement of blasphemy laws embedded in Nigeria's criminal and Shari'a codes results in the arbitrary detainment and imprisonment of those who express their religious identity;

(9) North Korea, where any religion contrary to the ruling ideology known as Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism is deemed an existential threat to the state;

(10) Pakistan, where religious minorities face killings, lynchings, mob violence, forced conversions, and sexual violence for their religious identities;

(11) Russia, where laws on terrorism and extremism are used to target religious minorities such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, and members of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church for their beliefs;

(12) Tajikistan, where the government represses the display of public religiosity by individuals of all faiths and institutes strict restrictions against Muslims, including a ban on beards and hijabs;

(13) Turkmenistan, where the government controls all aspects of religious life and expression, monitors religious practice, and punishes nonconformity through administrative harassment, imprisonment, and torture; and

(14) Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine, where the Russian military has reportedly perpetrated 43 cases of targeted persecution of the clergy and more than 109 acts pressuring churches and religious figures representing Orthodox Christians, Ukrainian Greek-Catholics, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Jehovah's Witnesses since the launch of its full-scale invasion in February 2022;

Whereas violent extremists and non-state actors continue to capitalize upon violence and instability in countries to perpetrate serious human rights violations against religious minorities, including in—

(1) Latin America, where criminal gangs and paramilitary groups threaten and displace indigenous communities, destroy places of worship, and forcibly require conversion or renunciation of ancestral practices;

(2) Nigeria, where violent, non-state militant groups such as Boko Haram target Christians, as well as persons engaged in "un-Islamic" activities, including Muslim critics and elders;

(3) the Sahel region of Africa, where violent extremist organizations threaten violence against Christians who do not convert to Islam;

(4) Syria, where violent extremist organizations restrict the religious freedom of non-confirming Sunni Muslims and threaten the property, safety, and existence of religious minority groups such as Alawites, Christians, and Druze; and

(5) Yemen, where the Houthi rebels harass, defame, and incite hatred against vulnerable faith communities including the Christians, Baha'is, Jews, and non-religious persons who continue to be forced to flee to the south of the country or leave Yemen entirely; and

Whereas religious sites continue to be damaged or destroyed, especially in areas of conflict, including in—

(1) Burma, where the military junta has destroyed approximately 200 houses of worship and religious sites such as Buddhist monasteries, churches, and mosques, and has occupied religious compounds for use as military bases;

(2) China, where the government has destroyed mosques, shrines, gravesites, and other religious and cultural sites throughout Xinjiang and the country;

(3) Ethiopia, where ongoing violence between the government and non-state actors has led to drone strikes and attacks on church compounds such as the Full Gospel Church in the Oromiya region in which 8 people were killed;

(4) India, where places of worship such as Christian churches and Muslim madrasas continue to be destroyed, especially those in predominantly Christian and Muslim neighborhoods;

(5) Nigeria, where violent, non-state groups, such as Boko Haram, attack population centers and religious targets, including churches and mosques;

(6) Sudan, where members of the Rapid Support Forces attacked a Coptic Christian monastery and raided the Sudanese Episcopal Church in Khartoum, using both as bases for military operations; and

(7) Ukraine, where approximately 500 houses of worship have been damaged or destroyed since Russia's full-scale invasion of the country began in February 2022: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes religious freedom as a fundamental human right;

(2) recognizes the critical importance of religious freedom in—

(A) supporting democracy, good governance, and the rule of law;

(B) encouraging pluralism and robust political participation; and

(C) fostering global stability and peace;

(3) expresses grave concern over threats to religious freedom around the world, such as through harassment, violence, and imprisonment;

(4) condemns all efforts to suppress religious freedom, including through the criminalization of—

(A) religious exercise in public or private;

(B) the choice to have no faith;

(C) conversion from one religion to another;

(D) advocacy for religious freedom;

(E) sharing and spreading religious messages and educational materials; and

(F) construction and maintenance of religious holy sites;

(5) supports the invaluable work of religious freedom advocates in fighting for greater religious freedom around the world; and

(6) urges the Department of State to—

(A) continue robust bilateral and multilateral engagement with allies and partners on religious freedom;

(B) maintain and expand support for human rights activists, journalists, and civil society leaders working to protect religious freedom in countries of particular concern and Special Watch List countries;

(C) leverage all diplomatic and sanctions tools available to the United States Government to hold religious freedom violators accountable for their actions, including those authorized by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.);

(D) continue to impose sanctions on those responsible for violations of religious freedom pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Act (22 U.S.C. 2656 note);

(E) consider human rights abuses and religious freedom violations in prioritizing partners for free trade agreements; and

(F) promote religious freedom as an utmost priority for the United States in implementation of United States foreign policy.

SENATE RESOLUTION 570—DESIGNATING MARCH 1, 2024, AS "NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE EDUCATION DAY"

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. KING, Mr. CARPER, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WARNOCK, and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 570

Whereas it is essential for youth to learn and practice the art of communicating with and without technology;

Whereas speech and debate education offers students myriad forms of public speaking through which students may develop talent and exercise unique voice and character;

Whereas speech and debate education gives students the 21st century skills of communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration;

Whereas critical analysis and effective communication allow important ideas, texts, and philosophies the opportunity to flourish;

Whereas personal, professional, and civic interactions are enhanced by the ability of the participants in those interactions to listen, concur, question, and dissent with reason and compassion;

Whereas students who participate in speech and debate have chosen a challenging activity that requires regular practice, dedication, and hard work;

Whereas teachers and coaches of speech and debate devote in-school, afterschool, and weekend hours to equip students with life-changing skills and opportunities;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day emphasizes the lifelong impact of providing people of the United States with the confidence and preparation to both discern and share views;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day acknowledges that most achievements, celebrations, commemorations, and pivotal moments in modern history begin, end, or are crystallized with public address;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day recognizes that learning to research, construct, and present an argument is integral to personal advocacy, social movements, and the making of public policy;

Whereas the National Speech & Debate Association, in conjunction with national and local partners, honors and celebrates the importance of speech and debate through National Speech and Debate Education Day; and

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day emphasizes the importance of speech and debate education and the integration of speech and debate education across grade levels and disciplines: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 1, 2024, as “National Speech and Debate Education Day”;

(2) strongly affirms the purposes of National Speech and Debate Education Day; and

(3) encourages educational institutions, businesses, community and civic associations, and all people of the United States to celebrate and promote National Speech and Debate Education Day.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1614. Mr. PAUL (for himself and Mr. BRAUN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 7463, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2024, and for other purposes.

SA 1615. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7454, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1614. Mr. PAUL (for himself and Mr. BRAUN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 7463, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2024, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. . PROHIBITIONS RELATING TO THE PURCHASE OR SALE OF STATE OR MUNICIPAL SECURITIES.

(a) **EMERGENCY LENDING PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES.**—The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System may not establish any emergency lending program or facility, including pursuant to section 13(3) of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 343(3)), that purchases or sells any security issued by a State or municipality, including a bond, note, draft, or bill of exchange.

(b) **OPEN MARKET OPERATIONS.**—No Federal reserve bank may purchase or sell any security described in subsection (a), including pursuant to section 14 of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 353 et seq.).

SA 1615. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7454, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improve-

ment program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

TITLE IV—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 401. EXPANDING USE OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE GULF OF MEXICO.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall prioritize the authorization of an eligible UAS test range sponsor partnering with an eligible airport authority to achieve the goals specified in subsection (b).

(b) **GOALS.**—The goals of a partnership authorized pursuant to subsection (a) shall be to test the operations of innovative technologies in both commercial and non-commercial applications to—

(1) identify challenges associated with aviation operations over large bodies of water;

(2) provide transportation of cargo and passengers to offshore energy infrastructure;

(3) assess the impacts of operations in salt-water environments;

(4) identify the challenges of integrating such technologies in complex airspace, including with commercial rotorcraft; and

(5) identify the differences between coordinating with Federal air traffic control towers and towers operated under the FAA Contract Tower Program.

(c) **BRIEFING TO CONGRESS.**—The Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall provide an annual briefing to the appropriate committees of Congress on the status of the partnership authorized under this section, including detailing any barriers to the commercialization of innovative technologies in the Gulf of Mexico.

(d) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **ELIGIBLE AIRPORT AUTHORITY.**—The term “eligible airport authority” means an AIP-eligible airport authority that is—

(A) located in a state bordering the Gulf of Mexico which does not already contain a UAS Test Range;

(B) has an air traffic control tower operated under the FAA Contract Tower Program;

(C) is located within 60 miles of a port; and

(D) does not have any scheduled passenger airline service as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) **ELIGIBLE UAS TEST RANGE SPONSOR.**—The term “eligible UAS test range sponsor” means an existing sponsor of a UAS test range located in a landlocked State.

(3) **INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES.**—The term “innovative technologies” means unmanned aircraft systems and powered-lift aircraft.

(4) **UAS.**—The term “UAS” means an unmanned aircraft system.

(5) **UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM.**—The term “unmanned aircraft system” has the meaning given such term in section 44801 of title 49, United States Code.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I have three requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the senior Senator from Hawaii be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions from February 29, 2024, through March 5, 2024.

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

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President of the Senate, pursuant to Public Law 106-286, appoints the following Members to serve on the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People’s Republic of China: the Honorable SHERROD BROWN of Ohio; the Honorable LAPHONZA R. BUTLER of California.

JUSTICE FOR MURDER VICTIMS ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 3859, introduced earlier today by Senators GRASSLEY and OSSOFF.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3859) to ensure that homicides can be prosecuted under Federal law without regard to the time elapsed between the act or omission that caused the death of the victim and the death itself.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I further ask that the bill be considered read three times and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 3859) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 3859

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