

State of South Dakota

SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1999

754C0375

SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
ENGROSSED NO. **HCR1002** - 2/18/99

Introduced by: Representatives Hunt, Apa, Brooks, Crisp, Derby, Diedrich (Larry), Duenwald, Fiegen, Fryslie, Jaspers, Klaudt, McCoy, Napoli, Sutton (Daniel), and Windhorst and Senators Ham, Kloucek, Lange, Madden, Olson, Staggers, and Vitter

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Endorsing and supporting international freedom from
2 persecution for religious beliefs.

3 WHEREAS, the right of freedom of religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the
4 United States, since many of our Nation's founders, from John Winthrop to Roger Williams to
5 William Penn, fled religious persecution abroad in order to establish in law, as a fundamental
6 right and as a pillar of our Nation, the right to freedom of religion; and

7 WHEREAS, from its birth to this day, the United States has prized this legacy of religious
8 freedom and honored this heritage by standing for religious freedom and offering refuge to those
9 suffering religious persecution; and

10 WHEREAS, freedom of religious belief and practice is a universal human right and
11 fundamental freedom articulated in numerous international instruments, including the Universal
12 Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the
13 Helsinki Accords, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and
14 Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the United Nations Charter, and the European
15 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; and

1 WHEREAS, the right to freedom of religion is under renewed and, in some cases, increasing
2 assault in many countries around the world; and

3 WHEREAS, it is even more abhorrent that religious believers in many countries face such
4 severe and violent forms of religious persecution as detention, torture, beatings, forced marriage,
5 rape, imprisonment, enslavement, mass resettlement, and death merely for the peaceful belief in,
6 change of, or practice of their faith; and

7 WHEREAS, in many countries, religious believers are forced to meet secretly, and religious
8 leaders are targeted by national security forces and hostile mobs; and

9 WHEREAS, though not confined to a particular region or regime, religious persecution is
10 often particularly widespread, systematic, and heinous under totalitarian governments and in
11 countries with militant, politicized religious majorities; and

12 WHEREAS, persecution of religious believers around the world has emerged as one of the
13 most compelling human rights issues of the day, in particular, the worldwide persecution and
14 martyrdom of Christians persists at alarming levels, which is an affront to the international moral
15 community and to all people of conscience; and

16 WHEREAS, Chinese Christians and Tibetan Buddhists are now experiencing the worst
17 persecution at the hands of the Chinese government since the 1970s; and

18 WHEREAS, severe persecution of people for their religious beliefs is also occurring in North
19 Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Indonesia, including East Timor, and in certain countries in the Middle
20 East and the former Soviet Union, to name only a few; and

21 WHEREAS, the militant Muslim government of Sudan is waging what its leader had
22 described as a jihad, or religious war, against Christian and other non-Muslim citizens in the
23 southern part of the country, enforcing Islamic Shari'a law against non-Muslim African Sudanese,
24 torturing, starving, killing, and displacing over one million people, and enslaving tens of
25 thousands of women and children; and

1 WHEREAS, historically, the United States has in many instances failed to intervene
2 successfully to stop anti-Christian and other religious persecution; and

3 WHEREAS, in the past, the United States has forcefully taken up the cause of other
4 persecuted religious believers and the United States should continue to intervene on behalf of
5 persecuted religious believers throughout the world:

6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-
7 fourth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the
8 Legislature urges the United States to:

- 9 (1) Condemn violations of religious freedom, and to promote, and to assist other
10 governments in the promotion of, the fundamental right to freedom of religion; and
- 11 (2) Seek to channel United States security and development assistance to governments
12 other than those found to be engaged in gross violations of the right to freedom of
13 religion, as set forth in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, in the International
14 Financial Institutions Act of 1977, and in other formulations of United States human
15 rights policy; and
- 16 (3) Work with foreign governments that affirm and protect religious freedom, in order to
17 develop multilateral documents and initiatives to combat violations of religious
18 freedom and promote the right to religious freedom abroad; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Senator Thomas Daschle, Senate Minority Leader,
20 be commended for the appointment of Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, who has a strong
21 record of uncompromising opposition towards religious persecution, to the Commission on
22 International Religious Freedom, and that Senator Daschle, with other members of the South
23 Dakota delegation, recommend to the President of the United States the appointment of
24 additional commission members of uncompromising opposition towards religious persecution
25 to the newly created commission on religious persecution, created by the International Religious

1 Freedom Act of 1998.

1 **BILL HISTORY**

2 1/22/99 Scheduled for Committee hearing on this date.

3 1/22/99 State Affairs Do Pass Amended, Passed, AYES 12, NAYS 0. H.J. 123

4 1/26/99 House of Representatives Adopt Resolution, AYES 65, NAYS 0. H.J. 189

5 2/17/99 Scheduled for Committee hearing on this date.

6 2/17/99 Concurred in resolution as amended, AYES 8, NAYS 0. S.J. 550