

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 33

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 77

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 33—Relative to religious freedom in China.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 23, 1997.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 33, Haynes. Religious freedom in the People's Republic of China.

This measure would condemn all acts of religious intolerance and persecution worldwide. It would condemn human rights abuses and denials of religious liberty to Evangelical Protestants, Roman Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, and other religious believers in the People's Republic of China, and call upon the People's Republic of China to end this persecution. This measure would call upon the President and Congress of the United States to continue to make the cessation of persecution of these religious believers in the People's Republic of China a priority objective of the United States' foreign policy. It would also call upon the State Department to use diplomatic means to effect the release of, and encourage the People's Republic of China to immediately release, religious prisoners from imprisonment.

WHEREAS, Religious liberty is a fundamental and universal human right; and

WHEREAS, The right to worship has been affirmed by the United States government, and specifically Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State, as a priority of our human rights policy; and

WHEREAS, The State Department's Bureau on Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad have identified instances of religious persecution and intolerance worldwide; and

WHEREAS, Annual "Human Rights Country Reports" issued by the State Department have shown that religious persecution and abuse are pervasive and consistent; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations and its High Commission on Human Rights have also documented examples of religious persecution and intolerance on a global scale; and

WHEREAS, The People's Republic of China has engaged and is now engaging in a policy of religious repression against Evangelical Protestants, Roman Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, and other religious believers, the Central Committee of the Communist Party

having identified these citizens as “a principal threat to political stability” within that nation; and

WHEREAS, The People’s Republic of China has wrongfully arrested and imprisoned for religious activities Bishop Su Zhimin, Bishop Thomas Zeng Jingmu, Bishop Joannes Han Dingxiang, Bishop An Shuxin, Reverend Cui Singlang, Reverend Qin Guoliang, the Reverend Charles Guo, Mr. Pan Kunming, Miss Pao Yanping, Mr. Yu Qixiang, Mr. Yu Shuishen, Miss Gao Shuping, and Mr. Yin Guozhen, and has placed Bishop Joseph Fan Zhongliang and Reverend Zan Caijun under police surveillance after ransacking their homes and seizing religious articles; and

WHEREAS, Church leaders and believers have regularly been subject to persecution throughout the People’s Republic of China, with widescale arrests occurring in Jiangxi and Yujia, and violence against persons and property committed in the provinces of Zhejiang and Shaanxi; and

WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II recently sounded a call against regimes that “practice discrimination against Jews, Christians, and other religious groups, going even so far as to refuse them the right to meet in private for prayer,” declaring that “this is an intolerable and unjustifiable violation, not only of all the norms of current international law, but of the most fundamental human freedom, that of practicing one’s faith openly”; and

WHEREAS, The National Association of Evangelicals, in January 1996, issued a Statement of Conscience and Call to Action, subsequently commended or endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America, in which they pledged to end their “silence in the face of the suffering of all those persecuted for their religious faith,” and called upon political leaders to do what is in their power to “take appropriate action to combat the intolerable religious persecution now victimizing fellow believers and those of other faiths”; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California hereby condemns all acts of religious intolerance and persecution worldwide, and supports ongoing efforts by the United States government and its leaders to ensure that all people are able to openly express their religious beliefs without fear of violence or persecution; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature strongly urges the State Department to use all diplomatic means at its disposal to effect the speedy release of all persons being imprisoned because of their religious beliefs as a demonstration of this nation’s adherence to the principle of freedom of religion; and be it further



Resolved, That the Legislature encourages the Government of the People's Republic of China to carefully consider the 1996 China Human Rights Report by the United States Department of State and to take steps to address the concerns and issues referenced in the report; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature hereby condemns the egregious violation of human rights and religious liberty of Evangelical Protestants, Roman Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, and other persecuted religious believers in the People's Republic of China and calls upon the government of the People's Republic of China to end that persecution; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature calls upon the President and Congress of the United States to continue to make the cessation of persecution of religious believers in the People's Republic of China a priority objective of the United States' foreign policy; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature encourages the People's Republic of China to immediately release from imprisonment Bishop Su Zhimin, Bishop Thomas Zeng Jingmu, Bishop Joannes Han Dingxiang, Bishop An Shuxin, Reverend Cui Singlang, Reverend Qin Guoliang, and the Reverend Charles Guo, as well as Mr. Pan Kunming, Miss Pao Yanping, Mr. Yu Qixiang, Mr. Yu Shuishen, Miss Gao Shuping, Mr. Yin Guozhen, and all other imprisoned religious prisoners of conscience; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to representatives of the government of the People's Republic of China, the President and Vice President of the United States, the United States Congress, the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the United States Catholic Conference, the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, the Cardinal Kung Foundation, the Secretary of State, Freedom House, and the World Evangelical Fellowship.

