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REPORT
113–214

TO AMEND THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT OF 1998, H.R. 4028

JULY 21, 2014.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. MENENDEZ, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 4028]

The Committee on Foreign Relations, to which was referred the bill H.R. 4028, to amend the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, to include the desecration of cemeteries among the many forms of violations of the right to religious freedom, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of H.R. 4028 is to amend the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to include the desecration of cemeteries among the many forms of violations of the right to religious freedom.

II. COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 4028 was introduced on February 10, 2014, by Congresswoman Meng. It passed the House of Representatives on May 28, 2014, and was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on June 2, 2014. On July 16, 2014, the committee considered H.R. 4028 and ordered it reported favorably by voice vote.

III. DISCUSSION

Congress passed the International Religious Freedom Act in 1998 to affirm America's commitment to religious freedom, enshrined

both in the United States Constitution and in numerous international human rights instruments. H.R. 4028 makes clear that the defacing or destruction of a cemetery—based on an affiliation with a particular religious or spiritual group—should not be tolerated by governments. It also ensures inclusion of a description of this problem in the annual International Religious Freedom Report by the Department of State and will aid those working to monitor and combat religious intolerance.

A section-by-section discussion of the legislation follows.

Section 1 provides relevant findings on cemetery desecration.

Section 2 amends Section 2(a)(4) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to insert "desecration of cemeteries" after "confiscations of property,".

IV. COST ESTIMATE

In accordance with Rule XXVI, paragraph 11(a) of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee notes that the cost estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office was not available for inclusion in this report. The estimate will be printed in either a supplemental report or the Congressional Record when it is available.

V. EVALUATION OF REGULATORY IMPACT

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 11(b) of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee has determined that there is no regulatory impact as a result of this legislation.

VI. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with Rule XXVI, paragraph 12 of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman).

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT OF 1998

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TITLE II—COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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SEC. 2. FINDINGS; POLICY

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

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(4) The right to freedom of religion is under renewed and, in some cases, increasing assault in many countries around the world. More than one-half of the world's population lives under regimes that severely restrict or prohibit the freedom of their citizens to study, believe, observe, and freely practice the religious faith of their choice. Religious believers and communities suffer both government-sponsored and government-tolerated violations of their rights to religious freedom. Among the many forms of such violations are state-sponsored slander campaigns, confiscations of property, *desecration of cemeteries,* sur-

veillance by security police, including by special divisions of "religious police", severe prohibitions against construction and repair of places of worship, denial of the right to assemble and relegation of religious communities to illegal status through arbitrary registration laws, prohibitions against the pursuit of education or public office, and prohibitions against publishing, distributing, or possessing religious literature and materials.

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