

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 430 Session of 2014

INTRODUCED BY GREENLEAF, STACK, WILLIAMS, ARGALL, SCARNATI, FONTANA, SCHWANK, EICHELBERGER, MENSCH, SMITH, GORDNER, VULAKOVICH, ERICKSON, WAGNER, McILHINNEY, WHITE, YUDICHAK, KITCHEN, ALLOWAY, RAFFERTY, DINNIMAN, PILEGGI, HUTCHINSON AND SOLOBAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2014

SENATOR WAGNER, INTERGOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, AS AMENDED, OCTOBER 8, 2014

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the President and the Congress of the United States to
2 publicly denounce the crimes against humanity occurring in
3 Iraq and to take every step possible PRUDENT ACTION to
4 protect Iraqi Christians and other religious minorities from
5 persecution from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. <--

6 WHEREAS, Iraq is currently embroiled in a surge of violence
7 arising from an Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-led
8 offensive that began in the Anbar province, has spread to key
9 locations such as Mosul, Tikrit and Samarra and continues to
10 engulf the region in violence and instability; and

11 WHEREAS, On June 29, 2014, ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi
12 renamed the group the Islamic State and pronounced himself
13 caliph of a new Islamic Caliphate encompassing the areas under
14 his control; and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. al-Baghdadi has a stated mission of spreading
16 the Islamic State and caliphate across the region through
17 violence against Shiites, non-Muslims and unsupportive Sunnis;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Upon taking control over northwestern Iraq and
3 Syria, ISIL issued a warning to Christians living under its
4 jurisdiction to convert to Islam, to pay a burdensome religious
5 tax or to be executed; and

6 WHEREAS, Over 1,000,000 people have been displaced by
7 violence in Iraq and reports have surfaced of targeted
8 harassment, persecution and killings of Iraqi religious
9 minorities by the Islamic State with little to no protection
10 from the Government of Iraq and other security forces; and

11 WHEREAS, Reports indicate that Islamic State militants have
12 been marking homes of Christians with the Arabic letter "N," for
13 "Nazara" (Christian), beheading children and crucifying
14 captives. ISIL's actions are a crime against humanity and
15 nothing more than genocide or ethnic cleansing against religious
16 minority groups; and

17 WHEREAS, The Iraqi constitution provides for religious
18 freedom by stating:

19 (1) "no law may be enacted that contradicts the
20 principles of democracy";

21 (2) "no law may be enacted that contradicts the rights
22 and basic freedoms stipulated in this Constitution"; and

23 (3) "[This Constitution] guarantees the full religious
24 rights to freedom of religious belief and practice of all
25 individuals such as Christians, Yazidis, and Mandeans
26 Sabeans";

27 and

28 WHEREAS, President Barack Obama recently declared on
29 Religious Freedom Day, "Foremost among the rights Americans hold
30 sacred is the freedom to worship as we choose ... [W]e also

1 remember that religious liberty is not just an American right;
2 it is a universal human right to be protected here at home and
3 across the globe. This freedom is an essential part of human
4 dignity, and without it our world cannot know lasting peace";
5 and

6 WHEREAS, The atrocities being committed against Christians
7 and other ethnic and religious minority communities in Iraq are
8 unconscionable and represent a crime against humanity; therefore
9 be it

10 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
11 urge the President and the Congress of the United States to
12 publicly denounce the crimes against humanity occurring in Iraq
13 and to take ~~every step possible~~ PRUDENT ACTION to protect Iraqi <--
14 Christians and other religious minorities from persecution from
15 the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; and

16 RESOLVED, That the President and Congress urge the Government
17 of Iraq to take immediate steps to protect the safety and
18 constitutional rights of all Iraqi citizens; and

19 RESOLVED, That the President and Congress work with the
20 Government of Iraq to bring Islamic State militants to justice
21 before an international forum for war crimes and crimes against
22 humanity; be it further

23 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
24 the President of the United States, to the presiding officers of
25 each house of Congress and to each member of Congress from
26 Pennsylvania.