

Again, I commend Mr. CHABOT for his insight in putting forward this resolution. I thank our chairman. I support this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the chairman emeritus of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their wonderful leadership for many years on the issue of strengthening U.S.-Taiwan relations. I also want to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), my dear friend, for authoring this important resolution of which I am proud to be a cosponsor.

H. Con. Res. 88 reaffirms the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances as the cornerstones of U.S.-Taiwan relations, guidelines to which there should be no doubt about the commitment of the United States to our neighbor.

In January, Taiwan once again demonstrated that it is one of the world's strongest and most vibrant democracies, a great partner, and I congratulate President-elect Tsai on her tremendous election and all of the people of Taiwan on their continued democratic success.

Taiwan is truly a beacon of freedom in the Pacific, serving as an inspiration for those still suffering under repressive regimes, and is living proof of what can be achieved with liberty and self-government, principles that undergird both of our nations and form the foundation for our mutual stability, for our security, for our prosperity.

As Taiwan's neighbor China continues raising tensions in the region, it is crucial that the United States provide Taiwan with the capability to defend herself against Chinese aggression, whether that aggression is political in nature, economic, or military. Both China and Taiwan must know that our commitment to Taiwan has not wavered one bit.

Taiwan is an essential U.S. ally. It is our friend. It is our partner. I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), my friend, for authoring this resolution, for reaffirming our commitment to the Taiwan Relations Act, to the Six Assurances, and to the Taiwanese people here today.

The United States will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Taiwan. I look forward, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, and ranking member, to even greater cooperation and friendship with Taiwan in the years ahead.

I thank the gentleman for the time, and I thank the ranking member for his leadership and Mr. CHABOT for authoring this important resolution.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H. Con. Res. 88 and its effects on U.S. foreign relations.

Since 1979, the United States has enjoyed a friendly and productive relationship that has been supported by the passage of the Taiwan Relations Act and Six Assurances. The Taiwan Relations Act was a monumental piece of legislation that is directly responsible for fostering the longstanding friendship between the United States and Taiwan. The Six Assurances also played a significant role, setting the principles by which the United States would mediate its relationship with Taiwan and China.

As security concerns have increased in the South Pacific, our allies in the region have contributed significantly to the safety and economic growth of the region. As a member of the Congressional Taiwan Caucus, I am continually supportive of efforts to strengthen the friendship between our two countries.

I would like to commend Congressman CHABOT, Chairman ROYCE, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs for their leadership on this issue and their continued efforts in championing the close ties we have with Taiwan. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this measure so we can continue to ensure a bright future for both Taiwan and for the United States.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As one of the coauthors of this legislation, I really want to thank Representative CHABOT for introducing this measure and for being a longtime champion on Taiwan, especially as he was chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific last Congress. I want to thank Mr. ENGEL as well for his efforts on this legislation.

We have a commitment to democracy, and we share that with Taiwan. We share this commitment to the rule of law, to human rights. Frankly, Taiwan serves as an example of what can be built based upon these shared principles, and so do we.

I think the Six Assurances are a critical element of U.S.-Taiwan policy, but obviously they are not consistently referenced or referred to as a cornerstone of U.S.-Taiwan policy alongside the Taiwan Relations Act, which is considered that cornerstone. Passage of H. Con. Res. 88 will put that longstanding verbal agreement onto paper, and, in turn, it will call on the administration and future administrations in unambiguous terms to publicly abide by the assurances offered by President Reagan.

Taiwan is one of America's closest friends, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 88.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 88, reaffirming the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances as the cornerstone of U.S.-Taiwan relations.

As a co-Chair of the Congressional Taiwan Caucus, I want to thank my colleague and founding co-Chair of the Taiwan Caucus, STEVE CHABOT, for introducing this measure.

When discussing the origins, stakeholders, and impact of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), it is important to note the significant role Congress played in amending the draft legislation the Executive Branch proposed for the maintenance of unofficial relations with Taiwan.

I want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee for working with me on an amendment to H. Con. Res. 88 that credits Congress with significantly strengthening the TRA and the codified U.S. commitment to Taiwan.

The draft legislative text proposed by the Executive Branch published in the March 1979 Department of State Bulletin included three simple titles to provide the legal authority for the maintenance of commercial, cultural, and other relations with Taiwan.

However, the Taiwan Relations Act enacted into law bears little resemblance to the text published in the March 1979 Bulletin.

Through the legislative process in both the House of Representatives and Senate, Congress left its mark on our enduring commitment to Taiwan in several ways, most notably by adding the security commitments made in Section 2(b)(5) and Section 3 of the TRA.

The U.S. and Taiwan have since developed a dynamic relationship based on our shared values, deep economic ties, security relationship, and a history of bilateral collaboration.

It is in the tradition of Congressional stewardship of the U.S.-Taiwan relationship that I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 88.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 88, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the concurrent resolution was amended so as to read: "Concurrent resolution reaffirming the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances as cornerstones of United States-Taiwan relations."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING AUTHORITY TO MAINTAIN AND OPERATE A TOLL BRIDGE ACROSS THE RIO GRANDE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2143) to provide for the authority for the successors and assigns of the Starr-Camargo Bridge Company to maintain and operate a toll bridge across the Rio Grande near Rio Grande City, Texas, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2143

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

SECTION 1. STARR-CAMARGO BRIDGE.

Public Law 87-532 (76 Stat. 153) is amended—

(1) in the first section, in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) by inserting “, and its successors and assigns,” after “State of Texas”;

(B) by inserting “consisting of not more than 14 lanes” after “approaches thereto”; and

(C) by striking “and for a period of sixty-six years from the date of completion of such bridge.”;

(2) in section 2, by inserting “and its successors and assigns,” after “companies”;

(3) by redesignating sections 3, 4, and 5 as sections 4, 5, and 6, respectively;

(4) by inserting after section 2 the following:

“SEC. 3. RIGHTS OF STARR-CAMARGO BRIDGE COMPANY AND SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Starr-Camargo Bridge Company and its successors and assigns shall have the rights and privileges granted to the B and P Bridge Company and its successors and assigns under section 2 of the Act of May 1, 1928 (45 Stat. 471, chapter 466).

“(b) REQUIREMENT.—In exercising the rights and privileges granted under subsection (a), the Starr-Camargo Bridge Company and its successors and assigns shall act in accordance with—

“(1) just compensation requirements;

“(2) public proceeding requirements; and

“(3) any other requirements applicable to the exercise of the rights referred to in subsection (a) under the laws of the State of Texas.”; and

(5) in section 4 (as redesignated by paragraph (3))—

(A) by inserting “and its successors and assigns,” after “such company”;

(B) by striking “or” after “public agency.”;

(C) by inserting “or to a corporation,” after “international bridge authority or commission.”; and

(D) by striking “authority, or commission” each place it appears and inserting “authority, commission, or corporation”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and to extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2143, the Starr-Camargo Bridge act, introduced by Senator CORNYN and by Representative CUELLAR of Texas. With today's passage, this bill goes to the President's desk for signature.

The Starr-Camargo Bridge act grants permanent authority to continue operating and maintaining the international bridge that connects Rio Grande City, Texas, with Mexican cities such as Monterrey and Mexico City. This bridge is one of 28 vehicle border crossings on the Texas-Mexico border and one of two privately owned crossing facilities. The Starr-Camargo

Bridge has had continued growth in commercial traffic since 2009, and it plays an important role in facilitating legitimate trade and travel in the region.

This bill, S. 2143, would permanently extend the authority for the Starr-Camargo Bridge Company to operate the bridge. It would grant the bridge company the same rights and privileges already granted to this body to the B and P Bridge Company in Progreso, Texas. By granting this authority, we would be incentivizing the Starr-Camargo Bridge Company to continue maintaining and expanding the bridge's capacity to keep up with growing trade and commerce along the Texas border with Mexico.

This legislation received the full support of the Committee on Foreign Affairs when it was marked up last month.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this measure, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me once again thank our chairman, ED ROYCE, for bringing forward this bipartisan measure and for his continued good leadership on the committee. I also want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR), my good friend, who introduced the House version of this legislation which has already passed the Senate.

When it comes to our southern neighbor, Mexico, lately we have been hearing far too much about building walls. Mexico is a critically important partner to the United States. Our people share long, close ties, so we should be talking about building bridges, Mr. Speaker, not building walls.

A few weeks ago, the Senate helped build a bridge by confirming a new Ambassador to Mexico, Roberta Jacobson. This was long overdue. She is excellent, and we are glad to have her on her way to Mexico City now.

Today, with this bill, we are talking about, quite literally, strengthening a bridge between the United States and Mexico in the years ahead. The Starr-Camargo Bridge connects Rio Grande, Texas, with Monterrey and Ciudad Camargo in Mexico. The legal authority to operate this bridge will expire in 16 years. That may seem like a long way off, but as a result of that end date, we have already started to see a constraint in long-term investments. This bill would eliminate that expiration date.

We have done the same thing before. The Weslaco-Progreso International Bridge once had a sunseting authorization, and Congress acted to lift that deadline.

This bill doesn't cost the U.S. taxpayers a penny, but it does clear the way for this bridge to remain an important conduit between our countries for years to come. It also sends an important message from those of us actually

responsible for making laws and advancing American foreign policy.

Mexico is an extremely important partner to the United States, and bridges—not barriers—will help that friendship to thrive. I support this measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR).

Mr. CUELLAR. I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank Chairman ED ROYCE for his leadership and for the help of his staff on this particular bill.

Also, I thank my friend, the ranking member, Mr. ELIOT ENGEL, and his staff also for supporting and helping us on this particular bill.

As the lead sponsor of this bill, I rise in support of this legislation. Mr. Speaker, this bill will provide equity in the law and removes a level of uncertainty.

In 1962, Congress authorized the Starr-Camargo International Bridge Company to construct, operate, and maintain the private toll bridge between the United States and Mexico near Rio Grande City, which is a city in my district.

Congress, in drafting this original authorization, included a sunset clause of 66 years. In doing so, Congress left a level of uncertainty in the law, as it did not state what should happen to the bridge once the 66 years went by.

Congress has authorized private toll bridges or other bridges along the U.S.-Mexico border before, yet previously had not included this sunset on the authorization. This sunset clause, while still a number of years away, has already begun to create issues for the owner and operator of the Starr-Camargo Bridge bill.

Due to this uncertainty around what should happen to this bridge should the authorization lapse, they are unable to get much-needed long-term financing to make improvements and finance the long-term maintenance and operations of the bridge. This bill will give the Starr-Camargo Bridge permanent status.

The Starr-Camargo Bridge plays an important role in our Nation's commerce and the economy of south Texas. The bridge supports 200 to 300 commercial trucks per day, consisting of construction materials as well as fresh fruits and vegetables coming north and machinery, oil, and recyclable products going south. The bridge further supports the crossing of around 4,000 cars a day.

Today the United States trades an estimated \$531 billion in goods and services with Mexico, our Nation's third largest trading partner, and this trade is only expected to grow in the future. In order for our Nation to take

full advantage of this trade, we must be clear in these sorts of uncertainties in the law.

This bill, by ending the authorization's sunset, will afford the bridge greater opportunities to pursue and finance projects that will enhance and expand the capacity of the bridge and supporting facilities and further improve trade between the United States and Mexico.

I would like to thank Senator CORNYN for working with me on this legislation and for taking that lead and, as I said a few minutes ago, Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their support as well as their staffs.

I also would like to thank local leaders, Starr County Judge Eloy Vera and State Representative Ryan Guillen, for their support of this legislation.

I ask my colleagues to support this important bill.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, in closing, again I want to emphasize that Mexico is a vital partner to the United States in terms of trade, security, and a wide range of regional concerns. We need to keep all the channels between our countries flowing, and that includes the physical connections between the U.S. and Mexico.

This bill would help strengthen an important bridge between our countries and, at the same time, signal just how important we consider this friendship. I support this measure, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR).

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to thank Representative CUELLAR for his steadfast leadership to ensure the House's consideration of this legislation and that we move forward on this.

I thought I would also point out that this bill comes at no cost to the taxpayer. What it does instead is incentivizes the private sector to invest and maintain this important commercial border crossing. That is the point here.

While the actual end date for the bridge's authority is still some years away, the lack of that permanent authority has already begun to constrain the financing of long-term improvements that will help make the crossing more efficient and secure.

So I thank Mr. CUELLAR again and, also, Mr. CASTRO and Mr. POE, both members of the committee who have also been strong supporters.

I thank Mr. ENGEL for helping to ensure that our border infrastructure is maintained and modernized to keep pace with the growing legitimate commercial activity across our southern border.

I encourage my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2143.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FRANK R. WOLF INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1150) to amend the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to improve the ability of the United States to advance religious freedom globally through enhanced diplomacy, training, counterterrorism, and foreign assistance efforts, and through stronger and more flexible political responses to religious freedom violations and violent extremism worldwide, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1150

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings; Policy.
- Sec. 3. Definitions.

TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF STATE ACTIVITIES

- Sec. 101. Office on International Religious Freedom; Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.
- Sec. 102. Annual Report on International Religious Freedom.
- Sec. 103. Training for Foreign Service officers; report.
- Sec. 104. Prisoner lists and issue briefs on religious freedom concerns.

TITLE II—NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

- Sec. 201. Special Adviser for International Religious Freedom.

TITLE III—PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

- Sec. 301. Non-state actor designations.
- Sec. 302. Presidential actions in response to particularly severe violations of religious freedom.
- Sec. 303. Report to Congress.
- Sec. 304. Presidential waiver.
- Sec. 305. Publication in the Federal Register.

TITLE IV—PROMOTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- Sec. 401. Assistance for promoting religious freedom.

TITLE V—DESIGNATED PERSONS LIST FOR PARTICULARLY SEVERE VIOLATIONS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- Sec. 501. Designated Persons List for Particularly Severe Violations of Religious Freedom.

TITLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

- Sec. 601. Miscellaneous provisions.
- Sec. 602. Clerical amendments.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; POLICY.

(a) FINDINGS.—Section 2(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by inserting immediately prior to the penultimate sentence the following new sentence: “The freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is understood to protect theistic and non-theistic beliefs as well as the right not to profess or practice any religion.”; and

(2) in paragraph (6)—

(A) by inserting “and the specific targeting of non-theists, humanists, and atheists because of their beliefs” after “religious persecution”; and

(B) by inserting “and in regions where non-state actors exercise significant political power and influence” after “religious majorities”.

(b) POLICY.—Section 2(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(6) Because the promotion of international religious freedom protects human rights, advances democracy abroad, and advances United States interests in stability, security, and development globally, the promotion of international religious freedom requires new and evolving policies, and diplomatic responses that are drawn from the expertise of the national security agencies, the diplomatic services, and other governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations, and are coordinated across and carried out by the entire range of Federal agencies.”.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

Section 3 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6402) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (13)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by redesignating clauses (iv) and (v) as clauses (v) and (vi), respectively; and

(ii) by inserting after clause (iii) the following:

“(iv) not professing a particular religion, or any religion;” and

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) by inserting “conscience, non-theistic views, or” before “religious belief or practice”; and

(ii) by inserting after “forced religious conversion” the following: “, forcibly compelling non-believers or non-theists to recant their beliefs or to convert”; and

(2) by adding at the end, the following new paragraphs:

“(14) SPECIAL WATCH LIST.—The term ‘Special Watch List’ means the Special Watch List as contained in the Executive Summary to the Annual Report and described in section 102(b)(1)(F)(iii).

“(15) NON-STATE ACTOR.—The term ‘non-state actor’ means a nonsovereign entity that exercises significant political power and is able to exert influence at a national or international level but does not belong to or ally itself to any particular country and often employs illegal violence in pursuit of its objectives.

“(16) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the meaning given that term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)”.

TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF STATE ACTIVITIES

SEC. 101. OFFICE ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM; AMBASSADOR AT LARGE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 101 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6411) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end before the period the following: “, and shall report directly to the Secretary of State”;

(2) in subsection (c)—