

Public Law 103-196
103d Congress

Joint Resolution

Designating January 16, 1994, as "Religious Freedom Day".

Dec. 14, 1993
[S.J. Res. 154]

Whereas December 15, 1991, is the 200th anniversary of the completion of the ratification of the Bill of Rights;

Whereas the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees religious liberty to the people of the United States;

Whereas millions of people from all parts of the world have come to the United States fleeing religious persecution and seeking to worship;

Whereas in 1777 Thomas Jefferson wrote the bill entitled "A Bill for Establishing Religious Freed in Virginia" to guarantee freedom of conscience and separation of church and State;

Whereas in 1786, through the devotion of Virginians such as George Mason and James Madison, the General Assembly of Virginia passed such bill;

Whereas the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom inspired and shaped the guarantee of religious freedom in the first amendment;

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States has recognized repeatedly that the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom was an important influence in the development of the Bill of Rights;

Whereas scholars across the United States have proclaimed the vital importance of such statute and leader in fields such as law and religion have devoted time, energy and resources to celebrating its contribution to international freedom; and

Whereas America's First Freedom Center, located in Richmond, Virginia, plans a permanent monument to the Statute of Religious Freedom, accompanied by educational programs and commemorative activities for visitors from around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That January 16, 1994, is designated as "Religious Freedom Day", and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling

on the people of the United States to join together to celebrate their religious freedom and to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved December 14, 1993.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 154:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 139 (1993):
Nov. 20, considered and passed Senate.
Nov. 21, considered and passed House.