it and urge my colleagues to join in doing the same.

Mr. CONDIT. Chairman, I move to strike the last word to speak in favor of the amendment.

I want to rise and show my support for the amendment, and I would like to commend the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) for being on their toes and being on guard for State government.

This is an amendment that is needed for the State governments, and I just commend them and congratulate them for doing this.

□ 2215

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words just briefly again to commend sponsors of this amendment.

We did work with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) last time around and were not able to do what really should have been done, it turned out. This is a needed technical correction really to the 1995 legislation, because it clarifies the intent of the original act to make it clear that State and local government could be given newer, expanded authority to meet their programmatic responsibilities if additional costs were imposed on them through entitlement reform.

So I want to thank the authors of the amendment and also echo what the gentleman from California (Mr. CONDIT) has said and issue my strong support.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PORTMAN. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Chairman, I thank my friend for yielding.

I would just like to offer an addendum to the very thoughtful list of supporters that was provided by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), and say that I suspect not many Members are aware of the fact that the International City-County Management Association, which is headed by Gary Gwinn, also strongly supports the Davis-Moran amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PORTMAN) having assumed the chair, Mr. SESSIONS, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3534) to improve congressional deliberation on proposed Federal private sector mandates, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and provide extraneous material on H.R. 3534.

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

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SESSIONS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FOX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McINNIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CLAYTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FREEDOM FROM RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION ACT OF 1998

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HOUGHTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk for a minute about a bill that we will be voting on tomorrow, and that is called the Freedom From Religious Persecution Act of 1998. The number is H.R. 2431.

This has gone through the Committee on International Relations. I was on that committee. I voted against it, and it has gone to the Committee on Ways and Means for a particular issue of a sequential referral.

I understand why people are concerned with persecution of individuals and various religions throughout this world, and many times it is out of a sense of compassion for these people. And yet at the same time, I think that there are ways of handling this which I do not think are being recognized here.

What this bill will do, and I know things have been changing rather rapidly in terms of the terminology, is, it will establish an Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring. Think of it, an Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring in our government. And that man who is in charge of that office will then recommend, in his own infinite wisdom, to the Secretary of State whether persecution is taking place throughout the world.

There are various categories involved here. I will not go into the specifics, but the important thing is that if a country has been decided to be involved in religious persecution in any way, whether this is tribal or whether this is two religions, whether the country has no control over it whatsoever, that country will then have a denial of United States foreign assistance, it will be subject to various trade sanctions, denial of visas, prohibition of exports, U.S. support for multilateral bank assistance, and a whole variety of different things. I think that is the wrong way of going about it.

We all in our own way and our own sense have a feeling of religion inside us, and we do not want to see anybody persecute it. The question is, really, who are the beneficiaries of this? I have talked to members of the Russian Orthodox Church. I have talked to the people who are in charge of the religious expression of a variety of different sects in Sudan. I have been to India. I have been to Zimbabwe. I have talked really recently to the National Council of Churches.

And whether it was in the Middle East or whether it was somebody who represented 27 million Muslims in Indonesia, I asked the question, ''Who wants this?'' The letters that we see supporting this particular act all come out of New York or Washington. None come from abroad. ''Who wants this?'' And there was not a single affirmative answer in that whole group.

So what we were doing, therefore, was literally imposing sort of a post-colonial Western sense of what is right and what is wrong on the peoples of this world. And in many cases, the governments have absolutely no control over what the religious persecution is. I know this is true in terms of Sudan. I know it is true in terms of a variety of other countries. And by the United States imposing its will upon those countries, those areas, which they really know very little about, they are going to be hurting more people than they are going to be helping.

So the question is, who are the intended beneficiaries? Not many. Billy Graham does not think this is a good idea. The Dalai Lama does not think this is a good idea. The Council of Churches does not think this is a good idea. A variety of organizations, such as the American Farm Bureau, does not think it is a good idea.

Why are we doing this? I think we are doing this out of a sense of compassion, but misdirected compassion.

It is wrong for us to set ourselves up as the arbiter of what goes on in a country. As much as we have a feeling for this thing, we must be very, very careful not to superimpose our own standards on the rest of the world, particularly when it involves something so

very, very personal such as your religious feelings.

RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2431, FREEDOM FROM RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION ACT

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105–534) on the resolution (H.Res. 430), providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2431) to establish an Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring, to provide for the imposition of sanctions against countries engaged in a pattern of religious persecution, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

TRIBUTE TO OFFICER DENNIS FINCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were on the floor, as it is National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Week, and we were talking about law enforcement and a number of bills we were trying to put forth and pass in this Congress, as we normally do during National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Week.

As founder and cochair of the Law Enforcement Caucus, I spend a lot of time on law enforcement issues. In fact, tomorrow at 3:30 in the Longworth Building, the Law Enforcement Caucus will be meeting to talk about pending legislation we have on body armor and the educational school benefits for those dependents of law enforcement officers who were killed in the line of duty, the police officers' bill of rights, a number of other issues that the Members would like to bring up to discuss with the Law Enforcement Caucus.

Actually, yesterday as we were debating the Visclosky bill, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act, H.R. 2829, which overwhelmingly passed this House; we talked a lot about what happens with police officers, and I mentioned a case which happened back in 1974 when I was a police officer.

Unfortunately, at that time, we did not know and the statistic was put forth that about every 2 days we lose a police officer. Up in my northern Michigan rural community, we lost a police officer in Traverse City yesterday. I regret to inform the Nation that Sergeant Dennis Finch of the Traverse City Police Department was murdered as he went to check on an individual at a residence in Traverse City. Sergeant Dennis Finch is survived by his wife Agnes and their two daughters, who are 30 and 23 years old.

It is a rather unusual report that we have been picking up in the news media about what happened to Sergeant Finch, but I think it certainly highlights what police officers go through day in and day out in their job. They never know the dangers they face.

The individual who murdered Sergeant Finch was well-known by police officers. They had a number of incidents with the individual, and he was described by neighbors as a disturbed man who believed the Mafia was after him. And in fact, yesterday, Tuesday, he was actually seen with a gun strapped to his hip, a pistol if you will, and it was described as a large handgun strapped in a holster; and he came up to people and he was talking to people about the Mafia and that the Mafia was giving him a hard time.

It made people nervous. And as often happens, they called police officers to investigate. And according to the newspaper articles, the assailant here was convinced that the Traverse City Police Department, that the cops are the Mafia, and as he told some people, ''Don't make any mistake about that.''

□ 2230

Unfortunately, in our line of work, people unfortunately do die, and we should not make any mistake about that. I find it ironic that as we were debating those bills that try to help all police officers, we had one in our district, at least in northern Michigan, lose his life. That is a very rare thing that happens in northern Michigan. Seldom do we have that kind of violence, but it surrounds us at all times.

As we go through National Law Enforcement Memorial Week, I hope we will keep Sergeant Finch in mind in some of the legislation we work on for law enforcement officers. Those of us who are past law enforcement officers, we try to work with this Congress to bring some degree of kindness and humanity to a very difficult occupation.

On Friday, it is usually my role as chair of the Law Enforcement Caucus to join in on Police Memorial Day, which is always on May 15, and that will be this Friday. This Friday I had planned on actually being in Traverse City, part of my district. I will be leaving Thursday night and had planned on taking part in a ceremony they hold every year in Traverse City on May 15 for fallen law enforcement officers.

This year's ceremony, unfortunately, will have a much deeper meaning for those of us who represent Traverse City and who knew Sergeant Finch. I will be in my district in Traverse City Friday and, hopefully, will get a chance to express the outrage and regret that this Congress feels when any police officer has fallen in the line of duty.

Our sympathies and deepest regrets go to his wife and his daughters and the rest of his family, his friends and fellow officers. This thing ended, after Sergeant Finch was shot, probably some 8, 9 hours later in a standoff before the assailant was finally apprehended.

We just ask that the good Lord may give strength to the family and to our communities in northern Michigan, and we may have peace returned to our northern Michigan communities as we have known before, and that the good Lord may take away our pain and bless this family that has suffered so much for this country and for Traverse City in northern Michigan communities.

DEMOCRATS DENY GRANTING OF IMMUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BARR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, before I get into my remarks, I would like to thank the previous speaker, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) for his remarks as we look to celebrate Law Enforcement Officers Day. I extend my condolences and sympathies to the people in his district and particularly to the family of the slain officer.

Mr. Speaker, I think it was Winston Churchill who speculated that, every now and then, mankind trips over the truth; but inevitably, he speculated and observed, mankind picks itself up, dusts itself off, and keeps right on going.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, by action of the Democrats unanimously today in the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, we were not even afforded the opportunity to trip over the truth. The Democrats have erected yet another stonewall designed to prevent us from getting at the truth.

I speak, Mr. Speaker, of the unanimous vote by the Democrats on the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight to deny what would be an important tool and what always has been an important tool for either law enforcement or investigative work of the Congress to get at the truth; and that is the granting of immunity.

Granting of immunity is a mechanism of long-standing and important history in our country, both here in the Congress and its investigative work as well, as in the work of law enforcement in which I engaged as a United States attorney in the Northern District of Georgia.

Granting immunity to witnesses is frequently the only way that law enforcement has of uncovering evidence sufficient to successfully prosecute important cases or for the Congress to elicit important testimony and evidence from recalcitrant witnesses.

Normally, when the Department of Justice, as it did in the case of the four proposed witnesses today, tells the Congress it has no objection to the granting of immunity for the witnesses, it is a pro forma, routine vote by whatever committee of the Congress it is that is seeking to elicit the testimony from those immunized or to-be-immunized witnesses to seek a grant of immunity. This is provided for in the United States statute, Title 18 of the U.S. Code, Section 6005(b)(2).