

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2711

To reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 30, 2014

Mr. DURBIN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “United States Commis-
5 sion on International Religious Freedom Reform and Re-
6 authorization Act of 2014”.

7 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT AND COMPOSITION.**

8 (a) LEADERSHIP.—Subsection (d) of section 201 of
9 the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22
10 U.S.C. 6431(d)) is amended to read as follows:

1 “(d) ELECTION OF CHAIR.—At the first meeting of
2 the Commission after May 30 of each year, a majority of
3 the Members of the Commission present and voting shall
4 elect the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission, subject
5 to the following requirements:

6 “(1) INITIAL ELECTIONS.—At the first meeting
7 of the Commission after May 30, 2015, the Members
8 of the Commission shall elect as Chair a Commis-
9 sioner appointed by an elected official of the political
10 party that is not the political party of the President,
11 and as Vice Chair a Commissioner appointed by an
12 elected official of the political party of the President.

13 “(2) FUTURE ELECTIONS.—At the first meet-
14 ing of the Commission after May 30, 2016, the
15 Members of the Commission shall elect as Chair a
16 Commissioner appointed by an elected official of the
17 political party of the President, and as Vice Chair
18 a Commissioner appointed by an elected official of
19 the political party that is not the political party of
20 the President. Thereafter, positions of Chair and
21 Vice Chair shall continue to rotate on an annual
22 basis between Commissioners appointed by elected
23 officials of each political party.

24 “(3) TERM LIMITS.—No Member of the Com-
25 mission is eligible to be elected as Chair of the Com-

1 mission for a second term, and no Member of the
2 Commission is eligible to be elected as Vice Chair of
3 the Commission for a second term.”.

4 (b) ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF AMBASSADOR AT
5 LARGE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.—
6 Subsection (f) of such section (22 U.S.C. 6431(f)) is
7 amended by adding at the end the following: “The Amba-
8 sador at Large shall be given advance notice of all Com-
9 mission meetings and may attend all Commission meet-
10 ings as a non-voting Member of the Commission.”.

11 (c) APPOINTMENTS IN CASES OF VACANCIES.—Sub-
12 section (g) of such section (22 U.S.C. 6431(g)) is amended
13 by striking the second sentence.

14 **SEC. 3. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

15 Section 203(e) of the International Religious Free-
16 dom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6432a) is amended to read
17 as follows:

18 “(e) VIEWS OF THE COMMISSION.—The Members of
19 the Commission may speak in their capacity as private
20 citizens. Statements on behalf of the Commission shall be
21 issued in writing over the names of the Members. Mem-
22 bers of the Commission shall make every effort to reach
23 consensus on all statements on behalf of the Commission,
24 including testimony, press releases, and articles by Com-
25 missioners or Commission staff. When a statement sup-

1 ported by all Commissioners is not possible, the Commis-
 2 sion shall issue a statement only if such statement is ap-
 3 proved by an affirmative vote of at least six of the nine
 4 Members of the Commission and each Member of the
 5 Commission may include the individual or dissenting views
 6 of the Member. The Commission shall in its written state-
 7 ments clearly describe its statutory authority, distin-
 8 guishing that authority from that of appointed or elected
 9 officials of the United States Government. Oral state-
 10 ments, where practicable, shall include a similar descrip-
 11 tion.”.

12 **SEC. 4. COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

13 (a) STAFF DIRECTORS.—Section 204 of the Inter-
 14 national Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C.
 15 6432b) is amended by striking subsections (a), (b), and
 16 (c) and inserting the following new subsections:

17 “(a) COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS.—Subject to sub-
 18 section (c), the Commission may appoint and fix the pay
 19 of such staff personnel as it deems desirable. All decisions
 20 pertaining to the hiring, firing, and fixing of pay of per-
 21 sonnel of the Commission shall be by an affirmative vote
 22 of at least six of the nine Members of the Commission,
 23 except that—

24 “(1) Members of the Commission appointed by
 25 an elected official of the political party of the Presi-

1 dent, by a majority vote thereof, shall be entitled to
2 appoint, terminate, and fix the pay of a Majority
3 Staff Director and shall have the authority to ap-
4 point, terminate, and fix the pay of three profes-
5 sional staff members who shall be responsible to the
6 Members of the Commission of the political party of
7 the President; and

8 “(2) Members of the Commission appointed by
9 an elected official of the political party that is not
10 the political party of the President, by a majority
11 vote thereof, shall be entitled to appoint, terminate,
12 and fix the pay of a Minority Staff Director and
13 shall have the authority to appoint, terminate, and
14 fix the pay of three professional staff members who
15 shall be responsible to the Members of the Commis-
16 sion of the political party that is not the political
17 party of the President.

18 “(b) STAFF APPOINTMENTS AND COMPENSATION.—
19 All staff appointments shall be made without regard to
20 the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter
21 53 of title 5 relating to classification of positions and Gen-
22 eral Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay for
23 the Majority Staff Director, Minority Staff Director, and
24 other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for level

1 V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such
2 title.

3 “(c) QUALIFICATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF.—
4 The Commission shall ensure that the professional staff
5 of the Commission consists of persons with expertise in
6 areas relevant to the issue of international religious free-
7 dom, including foreign affairs, direct experience abroad,
8 human rights, and international law.”.

9 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Subsection (e) of
10 such section (22 U.S.C. 6432b(e)) is amended by striking
11 “The Executive Director” both places it appears and in-
12 serting “The Majority Staff Director and the Minority
13 Staff Director”.

14 **SEC. 5. REPORT OF COMMISSION.**

15 (a) REPORT PUBLICATION DATE.—Section 205(a) of
16 the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22
17 U.S.C. 6433(a)) is amended by striking “Not later than
18 May 1 of each year” and inserting “Each year, not earlier
19 than 30 days after, and not later than 90 days after, the
20 publication of the Department of State’s Annual Report
21 on International Religious Freedom”.

22 (b) CONSENSUS ON REPORTS.—Section 205(c) of the
23 International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C.
24 6433(c)) is amended to read as follows:

1 “(c) INDIVIDUAL OR DISSENTING VIEWS.—Members
2 of the Commission shall make every effort to reach con-
3 sensus on the report. When a report supported by all Com-
4 missioners is not possible, the report shall be approved by
5 an affirmative vote of at least six of the nine Members
6 of the Commission and each Member of the Commission
7 may include the individual or dissenting views of the Mem-
8 ber.”.

9 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

10 Section 207(a) of the International Religious Free-
11 dom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6435(a)) is amended by strik-
12 ing “2014” and inserting “2016”.

13 **SEC. 7. TERMINATION.**

14 Section 209 of the International Religious Freedom
15 Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6436) is amended by striking
16 “September 30, 2014” and inserting “September 30,
17 2016”.

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