

the State, make compensation on the basis of the appraised market price of the houses or structures demolished." First, the article requires that the demolisher of the religious properties must consult with the religious organization that owns the religious properties or the organization that owns the site for religious activities, and solicit the opinions from Bureau of Religion which has jurisdiction over the area where the religious properties are located; second, the precondition for the demolition is that both the owner of the religious properties and the Bureau of Religion must agree to the demolition and relocation; third, in the case of demolition and relocation, priority should be given to the rebuilding of the site for religious activities. That article requires that one must solicit the views from the Bureau of Religion in the demolition and the relocation. In fact, it requires the Bureau of Religion to implement its obligation of protecting the legitimate rights of religious organizations or sites for religious activities, and ensure the religious activities be held in a normal manner and maintains the harmony of religious relationships.

At the end of 2007, Hu Jintao made a speech on religion in which he explicitly pointed out that the government should reflect the will of the believers and earnestly safeguard the legitimate rights of the people in the religious circle.

The current problem is that the conflict over religious properties between the growth of religion and the economic development (i.e. the interests of special interest groups) is becoming more and more prominent. For example, in the religious properties case in Tianshui, Gansu province in 2006, the believers had to use the sit-in demonstrations to defend their rights. Because the local government changed its hard-line attitude in a timely manner, held negotiations with the church, united the believers in a maximum manner, and proposed a solution to safeguard the legitimate rights of the people in the religious circle, the incident was resolved in a way both sides were relatively satisfied, and it quickly restored the social stability. In the case involving religious properties in Taian, Shandong province in 2007, the believers defended their rights by guarding the religious properties, demanding that provincial CCC/TSPM intervene, petitioning at the government site and petitioning in higher authorities. The two sides finally reached a compromise. The advantages of the two cases in Gansu and Shandong have these following characteristics in common: The religious properties are protected either with land for land exchange or remained unchanged.

III. MY PROPOSALS

Mr. Wang Zuoan, the new director at State Administration for Religious Affairs, pointed out in a recent speech in welcoming the United Religious Delegation from the U.S., that the characteristics of the relationship in China between the state and the church are: separation of the church and the state, equality among all the religions, administration according to law, and political participation.

Currently, the key issue is that only religious organizations that are affiliated to the government are regarded as legal religious entities. Only by being in such a status can the organizations hold all the religious activities. In other words, the state protects religious activities in this sense. Otherwise, all other activities are illegal ones and should be restricted or cracked down.

Therefore, the Congress should work with the Chinese government and promote change in the following areas:

1. If they implement the separation between the state and the church, they should

try to abandon the mentality of regarding religions, especially Christianity, as "enemies" or representatives of the West attempting to infiltrate China.

2. If they recognize equality among all the religions, they should recognize the Chinese house churches that have existed for 60 years and that are approved by the TSPM.

3. If they want to have administration on religions in accordance with law, they should require that the state law and regulations meet with the relevant international conventions, such as revising the registration system for religious organizations and change it to the system of record filing from the current system of review and approval; they should let the parents decide first of all or mainly the issue of the religious belief of their minor children, instead of using state control by force on this issue; they should respect and protect religious properties and prevent special interest groups from infringing upon the legitimate interests of the people in religious circles.

4. The religious case widely regarded as a litmus test on the freedom of religion in China is the religious case in Linfen, Shanxi that just happened last month and is still worsening.

Jindengtang Church of Linfen is a house church. It has a history of 30 years and it currently has a membership of 50,000 people. After its religious properties at the church in Fushan County were demolished, they were cracked down during their negotiations with the government. At this time, over 30 of its church branches are forbidden to gather. The pastor, his wife and core-co-workers have been arrested. The US Congress may communicate with the Chinese government on this case through appropriate manners.

NATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 729, to designate a National Firefighters Memorial Day to honor the courage, bravery, service and sacrifice of the Firefighters of the United States.

Firefighters are the backbone of our communities. Of the 1,000,000 firefighters in America, 71 percent are volunteer firefighters. They are often the first to respond to an emergency, whether the emergency is a fire, transportation accident, natural disaster, act of terrorism, medical emergency, or spill of hazardous materials. These great men and women respond to nearly 2 million calls each year without hesitation. They have an unwavering dedication to protecting those that are in distress.

First responders are often under-appreciated and taken for granted until crisis strikes and the public reaches out for help and rescue. Against all common sense and natural instinct, firefighters rush to the scene of an emergency and into harm's way without the slightest hesitation. While our natural instinct is to run away from the fire—our fire fighters are running in.

Without the promise of any fame, fortune, or so much as a simple "thank-you", firefighters remain constantly vigilant and ready to serve.

On that horrendous September day in 2001, we lost 343 firefighters in the line of duty.

In responding to approximately 1.6 million fires set each year, we see our firefighters rushing to the scene saving countless lives and sometimes giving theirs in return.

I know sometimes younger people idolize professional athletes and cheer for their favorite sports teams. And the same could be said for some adults too. But if you really want to see true teamwork search no further than your local fire station. It is here where men and women work together and count on each other to protect lives. Their service demonstrates courage, camaraderie, and bravery.

It is time that we honor those men and women who have given their lives and those that were disabled in the line of duty. I urge the President to designate a day as National Firefighters Memorial Day and I urge my colleagues to support this very important legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. NUNES. Madam Speaker, on the legislative day of Thursday, October 29, 2009, I was unavoidably detained and was unable to cast a vote on a number of rollcall votes. Had I been present, I would have voted: rollcall 823—"nay"; rollcall 824—"nay"; rollcall 825—"yea"; rollcall 826—"nay"; rollcall 827—"yea"; rollcall 828—"aye"; rollcall 829—"aye"; rollcall 830—"yea"; rollcall 831—"yea."

18TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EN- THRONEMENT OF ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, today, November the 2nd, marks the 18th anniversary of the enthronement of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who as the first among equals, presides over a spiritual communion of self-governing churches that represent 300 million Orthodox Christians from around the world. Throughout the eighteen years of his ecumenical ministry, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has asked all of us to act with sensitivity and understanding towards our brethren and towards our natural environment.

When the Iron Curtain came down, His All Holiness provided spiritual and moral support to those traditionally Orthodox countries that suffered religious persecution under the yoke of communism. And after years of historical tension, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope John Paul II earnestly pursued upon the reconciliation of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian Churches.

In 1997, recognizing Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's robust activity and positive influences upon the world, this House awarded him with the Congressional Gold Medal. And when our country was attacked in New York and in Washington, His All Holiness assembled a group of international religious leaders