

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 325

Expressing the sense of the Congress with respect to government discrimination in Germany based on religion or belief, particularly against United States citizens.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 6, 1998

Mr. SALMON (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. NEY, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. ROGAN, Mr. GEPHARDT, Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania, Mr. GEJDENSON, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. FORBES, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. SCARBOROUGH, Mr. THOMPSON, Mr. FOLEY, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mr. WELLER, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. BECERRA, Mrs. CHENOWETH, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. FORD, Mr. DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. OWENS, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mrs. MEEK of Florida, Mr. BISHOP, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. WYNN, Ms. LEE, Mr. HILLIARD, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mrs. CLAYTON, Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD, Mr. EVANS, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. METCALF, Mr. STOKES, Mr. GUTKNECHT, and Mr. ROTHMAN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress with respect to government discrimination in Germany based on religion or belief, particularly against United States citizens.

Whereas government discrimination in Germany based on religion or belief violates Germany's obligation as a signatory to the Helsinki Accords which provides that Ger-

many respect “human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief”, and violates Germany’s obligation as a signatory to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantee that “everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion”;

Whereas the 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997 State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices identified in Germany acts of federal, state, or local government discrimination against minority religions, including acts against American citizens;

Whereas the 1997 Report to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations by the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Religious Intolerance concluded that the Government of Germany “must implement a strategy to prevent intolerance in the field of religion and belief”, and that “sustained efforts are required to promote and develop a culture of tolerance and human rights”;

Whereas the January 1998 interim report of the State Department’s Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad warned that unless the German Government’s Parliamentary Enquete (Inquiry) Commission on “so-called sects and psycho groups”, which has sought information on religious groups such as the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Charismatic Christians, and others, “focuses [its] work on investigating illegal acts, [it] runs the risk of denying individuals the right to freedom of religion or belief”;

Whereas the January 1998 interim report of the State Department’s Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad specifically stated that, “[i]n Germany, members

of the Church of Scientology and of a Christian charismatic church have been subject to intense scrutiny by the Enquete Commission there, and several members have suffered harassment, discrimination, and threats of violence”;

Whereas in February 1997, a United States Federal Immigration Judge granted a German woman asylum in the United States finding that she had a well-founded fear of persecution based on her religious beliefs if she returned to Germany;

Whereas the 1997 and 1996 State Department Country Reports stated that “major political parties exclude Scientologists from membership”, and that “the State of Bavaria screens applicants for state civil service positions for Scientology membership”;

Whereas the 1996 State Department Country Report stated that “Business firms whose owners or executives are Scientologists may face boycotts and discrimination, sometimes with government approval,” and, the 1997 Country Report stated that “so-called ‘sect-filters’, statements by individuals that they are not affiliated with Scientology, are used by some business and other organizations to discriminate against Scientologists in business and social dealings”;

Whereas the 1996, 1995, and 1994 State Department Country Reports stated that “artists have been prevented from performing or displaying their works” because of their religious beliefs, including artists who are United States citizens;

Whereas the 1997 State Department Country Report stated that the Charismatic Christian Church of Cologne, led by

an American pastor, had reported that it had been “subjected over several years to vandalism, threats of violence and public harassment or scrutiny by sect commissioners”, and that authorities in Cologne ruled that the Church “did not contribute to the cultural, religious or spiritual values of German society”;

Whereas the 1997 State Department Country Report noted a Berlin state government ruling that held the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ doctrine of political neutrality to be anti-Democratic; and

Whereas in 1997, the President of the Muslim’s Women’s League testified before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) that the main problem facing Muslims in Europe, particularly a problem in Germany, is police brutality, which includes assault, harassment, and intimidation: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring), That the Congress—*

3 (1) urges the Government of Germany to take
 4 necessary action to protect the right of freedom of
 5 religion or belief guaranteed to everyone in Germany
 6 by international human rights covenants to which
 7 Germany is a signatory;

8 (2) continues to hold the Government of Ger-
 9 many responsible for protecting the right of freedom
 10 of religion or belief of United States citizens, and for
 11 not barring such citizens from living, performing,

1 doing business, or traveling in Germany because of
2 their religious beliefs; and

3 (3) calls upon the President of the United
4 States to assert the concern of the United States
5 Government to the Government of Germany regard-
6 ing government discrimination in Germany based on
7 religion or belief.

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