

- Sec.
6417. Prisoner lists and issue briefs on religious freedom concerns.

SUBCHAPTER II—COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

6431. Establishment and composition.
6432. Duties of Commission.
6432a. Powers of the Commission.
6432b. Commission personnel matters.
6433. Report of Commission.
6433a. Strategic plan.
6434. Applicability of other laws.
6435. Authorization of appropriations.
6435a. Standards of conduct and disclosure.
6436. Termination.

SUBCHAPTER III—PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

PART A—TARGETED RESPONSES TO VIOLATIONS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ABROAD

6441. Presidential actions in response to violations of religious freedom.
6442. Presidential actions in response to particularly severe violations of religious freedom.
6442a. Non-state actor designations.
6443. Consultations.
6444. Report to Congress.
6445. Description of Presidential actions.
6446. Effects on existing contracts.
6447. Presidential waiver.
6448. Publication in Federal Register.
6449. Termination of Presidential actions.
6450. Preclusion of judicial review.

PART B—STRENGTHENING EXISTING LAW

6461. Exports of certain items used in particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

SUBCHAPTER IV—REFUGEE, ASYLUM, AND CONSULAR MATTERS

6471. Use of Annual Report.
6472. Reform of refugee policy.
6473. Reform of asylum policy.
6473a. Designated persons list for particularly severe violations of religious freedom.
6474. Studies on effect of expedited removal provisions on asylum claims.

SUBCHAPTER V—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

6481. Business codes of conduct.
6482. Voluntary codes of conduct for United States institutions of higher education outside the United States.
6483. Sense of Congress regarding national security strategy to promote religious freedom through United States foreign policy.

§ 6401. Findings; policy

(a) Findings

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The right to freedom of religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States. Many of our Nation's founders fled religious persecution abroad, cherishing in their hearts and minds the ideal of religious freedom. They established in law, as a fundamental right and as a pillar of our Nation, the right to freedom of religion. From its birth to this day, the United States has prized this legacy of religious freedom and honored this heritage by standing for religious freedom and offering refuge to those suffering religious persecution.

(2) Freedom of religious belief and practice is a universal human right and fundamental freedom articulated in numerous international

instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Helsinki Accords, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the United Nations Charter, and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

(3) Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance." Article 18(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognizes that "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching". The freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is understood to protect theistic and non-theistic beliefs and the right not to profess or practice any religion. Governments have the responsibility to protect the fundamental rights of their citizens and to pursue justice for all. Religious freedom is a fundamental right of every individual, regardless of race, sex, country, creed, or nationality, and should never be arbitrarily abridged by any government.

(4) The right to freedom of religion is under renewed and, in some cases, increasing assault in many countries around the world. More than one-half of the world's population lives under regimes that severely restrict or prohibit the freedom of their citizens to study, believe, observe, and freely practice the religious faith of their choice. Religious believers and communities suffer both government-sponsored and government-tolerated violations of their rights to religious freedom. Among the many forms of such violations are state-sponsored slander campaigns, confiscations of property, desecration of cemeteries, surveillance by security police, including by special divisions of "religious police", severe prohibitions against construction and repair of places of worship, denial of the right to assemble and relegation of religious communities to illegal status through arbitrary registration laws, prohibitions against the pursuit of education or public office, and prohibitions against publishing, distributing, or possessing religious literature and materials. A policy or practice of routinely denying applications for visas for religious workers in a country can be indicative of a poor state of religious freedom in that country.

(5) Even more abhorrent, religious believers in many countries face such severe and violent forms of religious persecution as detention, torture, beatings, forced marriage, rape, imprisonment, enslavement, mass resettlement, and death merely for the peaceful belief in,