

## HFAC PRESS RELEASE

# Chairman McCaul Announces HFAC Markup on Various Measures

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**Washington, D.C.** – House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul announced the full committee will hold a markup to consider various measures regarding export controls, prohibiting US contributions to UNRWA, restricting Iran’s access to U.S. goods and technology to manufacture missiles and long-range drones, designating the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization, and enhancing efforts to end international human trafficking on Tuesday, February 6th.

**What:** Markup of H.R. 7151, H.R. 6609, H.R. 7089, H.Con.Res. 27, H.R. 6603, **H.Res. 82**, H.R. 7159, H.Res. 965, H.R. 6046, H.R. 7122, and H.R. 7152.

**Date:** Tuesday, February 6th, 2024

**Time:** 10:00 am ET

**Location:** U.S. Capitol, HVC-210

**H.Res. 82**, Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need to designate Nigeria a Country of Particular Concern for engaging in and tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, the need to appoint a Special Envoy for Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, and for other purposes. (See Bill text before Amendments [HERE](#)).

## TRANSCRIPT

(At approximately 11:49 am to 12:30 pm ET, Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024 of the full hearing which began at 10:25 am ET)

CLIPPED MEDIA-H. Res. 82: [Nigeria Hearing HFAC 02-06-2024 38-10.mp4](#)

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:00:00] Pursuant to notice, I now call up H. Res. 82, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need to designate Nigeria a country of particular concern for engaging in and tolerating systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom. The need to appoint a special envoy for Nigeria and the Lake Chad region.

And I also would like to recognize the Nigerian religious leaders who are in the audience today at this markup. They serve populations that have been devastated by these attacks. Bishop Wilfred Anagbe of the Diocese of Makurdi and Pastor Akili Yusuf who represents a network of 200 pastors and leaders (in northern Nigeria). I know I've met with you in my office personally, and I want to thank all of you for being here today and encourage you to stay strong and as Congress will stay strong with you. Uh, the resolution was circulated in advance, and the clerk shall designate the resolution.

**(female voice):** [00:01:08] H. Res. 82, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need to designate Nigeria a country of particular concern, for engaging in.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:01:16] Without objection, first readings, dispense with the reading of the resolution considered, read and open to amendment at any point. Is there any discussion on the resolution? Mister Smith is recognized.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:01:26] Mister chairman, I do have a minute nature of a substitute. I'll speak to that.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:01:31] Okay. Yes. Uh. Do any members seek recognition? Mr. Self is recognized.

**Rep. Keith Self (R-TX-3):** [00:01:41] Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:01:44] Yeah, we're not at amendments right now. We're just, uh, on discussion on the resolution. There being no further discussion on the resolution, and there are any amendments to the resolution.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:01:56] Mr. chairman, I have an amendment in the nature of a substitute at the desk and ask for its consideration.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:02:01] Okay. The clerk shall circulate the amendment in the nature of substitute. Thank you. I mean, get a flight. The court shall report the amendment.

**(female voice):** [00:02:44] Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.res. 82 offered by Mr. Smith of New Jersey. Strike the preamble and insert the following. Whereas in 2020, the Department of State designated the objection.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:02:55] For the reading of the amendments, dispense with. The gentleman from new Jersey is recognized for five minutes on his amendment.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:03:01] Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mister chairman, on Christmas Eve, approximately 300 Christians died in targeted attacks, and none of the perpetrators of this set of coordinated attacks in Nigeria's Plateau State have been held to account. It is unconscionable that President Tinubu, sworn in in May of 2023, has not acknowledged the religious motivations for these attacks and for attacks that have been ongoing and escalating. Secretary of State Blinken has not either, even in his joint press conference remarks. And I watched it with the Nigerian foreign minister. He did express our condolences, and we're grateful for that. Uh, but that's it. More needs to be done, and we need to do far more than we've done to date. Earlier this year, the Secretary once again refused to designate Nigeria as a country of particular concern, or CPC, prompting the chair and the vice chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom to say, quote, there is no justification as to why the State Department did not designate Nigeria as a country of particular concern, despite its own reporting and statements. Mister chairman, Genocide Watch is called Nigeria, quote, a killing field of defenseless Christians. Open doors reported that there were 5014 Christians murdered in 2022, nearly 90% of the total number of Christians killed worldwide, and Vatican News reported that over 52,250 Christians were slaughtered in Nigeria since 2009. I am convinced there's more the US can do to protect these believers, and that goes for Muslims as well and promote freedom of religion. That is why I authored the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, which was enacted in 2016 and strengthened our government's hand against authorities and non-state actors who violate religious freedom.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:04:54] That's why I strongly supported and chaired all the hearings, backing Congressman Frank Wolf's heroic efforts to enact the International Religious Freedom Act back in 1998. Unfortunately, the US Department of State is not using all the tools provided to hold guilty parties accountable. And that's why I've introduced this resolution on July 18th, 2023, I did share a hearing on the State Department's failure to designate countries

of particular concern, including Nigeria, in the International Religious Freedom Report. At that hearing, Abraham Cooper, chairman of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, testified, quote, In Nigeria, religious freedom continues. Conditions have remained abysmal, with state and non-state actors committing particularly severe violations against both Christians and Muslims. It clearly meets the CPC standard under IRFA, as evident by the State Department's own report released on May 5th. It also is why usurp US Commission on Religious Freedom recommended the appointment of a special envoy for Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin to maximize US diplomatic efforts to address the atrocities that are occurring. We have we have here today in our audience. You've already introduced them, uh, Mr. Chairman, uh, men who have witnessed unspeakable acts of harm. Bishop. Wilfred uh Nagbe of the Diocese of Makurdi, uh his people has been targeted for killings and displaced with impunity. He has said when you go where they are in the camps, you don't know what to preach. It's difficult to console them, to support them, to share with them the fear with them.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:06:38] And it's every day other people are coming in, coming into those camps, he said. The poor conditions make the children especially vulnerable to human trafficking, child labor and organ harvesting. We also have Pastor Akilah Yousef, who's with us today, and he represents a network of 200 pastors. And he has talked about how in the middle belt region of Nigeria, they face violence and are being slaughtered. This is his words. Because of our religion, this bill is very important. He goes on, it will serve as legislation to hold our government. That's the Nigerian government, of course, accountable for the millions of lives facing existential threat from the extremists. Bishop Matthew Kukah has also said traumatized persons are tortured by the bandits. The nation has become a massive killing field and he goes on and without objection, his full statement will be put in the record. Mr. chairman, I ask, so let me just conclude and there are other statements by made by so many people, uh, it couldn't be more clear that this is a CPC country. I would point out to my colleagues that we also call uh, for, um, uh, pushing back against Nigeria's blasphemy laws. Uh, they are one of seven, only seven countries in the world with criminal blasphemy laws that carry the death penalty. So we name some of those who have been so incited or put into jail, as you'd say, uh, and ask for their release and ask that we double down on just trying to stand with the oppressed and not with the oppressor, I yield back.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:08:14] Gentleman yields back. Any other member seek recognition? Mister Meeks is recognized.

**Rnk. Member Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY-5):** [00:08:19] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Uh, Nigerians continue to suffer under the threat of violence for how they practice their faith. Religious and inter-communal violence remains a true impediment to peace and prosperity for the people of Nigeria. Well, I thank Representative Smith for his years of work on advancing religious freedom. Unfortunately, I must oppose the amendment and resolution before us today. The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, lays out a clear process for making countries of particular concern or CPC designations. Congress authorized the president to make CPC designations, and the president delegates that authority to the Secretary of State. The statute makes clear that it is the administration's responsibility, through the use of evidence gathering and on the ground reporting, to determine which countries should be included on the CPC list. In the case of Nigeria, the Secretary of State followed that process, examined the evidence, and determined that Nigeria does not meet those criteria to be designated as CPC. Now, this does not mean that the State Department is not concerned by the state of religious freedom in Nigeria. Just this past December, the Secretary redesignated two non-state armed groups, Boko Haram and Isis WA as entities of particular concern for their severe violations of religious freedom. And we know that during the administrations successive high-level visits to the country, American officials make a point to regularly raise issues of human rights and religious freedom with their government interlocutors.

**Rnk. Member Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY-5):** [00:10:09] The State Department has also made it clear it continues to work with Nigeria's security services, civil society and religious leaders to address the drivers of communal violence. Drivers that are complex in nature and include competition for resources and land use in addition to religious strife. And I urge the State Department to continue to do that work. It is important to note that violence against communities based on religious belief unfortunately affects people of many faiths in Nigeria. This resolution calls attention mainly to the attacks on Christians who have suffered heinous attacks, including this past Christmas. Muslim communities have also been subjected to terrible violence and we must acknowledge that suffering as well. I call on the Government of Nigeria to prioritize efforts to prevent conflict before it starts and address it when it arrives arises, including by ensuring that freedom of religion is both recognized and respected. I know the

State Department shares this goal and is using its authority as Congress authorized to advance religious freedom globally. With that Mr. Chairman...

**Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11):** [00:11:30] Mr. Chairman, Mr. Meeks would you yield?

**Rnk. Member Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY-5):** [00:11:32] I yield.

**Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11):** [00:11:33] Thank you. I want to associate myself with your remarks. I appreciate Mr. Smith's efforts, but look, uh, Congress can't simply say we're only concerned about Christian persecution.

**Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11):** [00:11:47] Um, we are concerned about anyone's human rights being violated. And by the way, that includes the gay and lesbian community which has suffered in Nigeria, among other African countries. Um, even at the hands of religious leaders. Who have called for the death penalty. For because of somebody's sexual orientation. So, you know, if we're going to express ourselves with respect to human rights abuses, as we should, it ought to be a comprehensive statement, not a particular group we single out and basically say, that's the one we're concerned about. I don't think that's a message Congress wants to send. I thank my friend for yielding.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:12:33] Gentleman yields. Uh, any other members seek recognition, Miss Jacobs?

**Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-CA-51):** [00:12:38] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I oppose this resolution. While I am concerned about the state of religious freedom in Nigeria and the horrific violence we've seen in the country. We also need to recognize that the role of religion in conflict in Nigeria is complex, and it affects both Christians and Muslims. Yet this resolution suggests that Muslims do not also share a significant burden of the violence. And while religion is a factor in various conflict dynamics, there are other dynamics at play like climate change, population pressures and governance challenges that lead to violence and conflict. I would also point out that the department already followed the process to consider Nigeria as a possible country of particular concern, based on an assessment of the actions of the Nigerian government, and they determined that they did not meet the criteria because much of the violence referenced in

this resolution was perpetrated by non-state actors like Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa, not the Nigerian government. So I disagree with directing the department to designate Nigeria as a country of particular concern, and I oppose this resolution. I yield back.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:13:46] To any other members seek recognition. There being no further discussion, does any member wish to offer an amendment to the amendment? In the nature of a substitute, Mr. Self is recognized.

**Rep. Keith Self (R-TX-3):** [00:13:58] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment at the desk.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:14:02] The clerk shall distribute the amendment. The court shall report the amendment.

**(female voice):** [00:14:34] Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.res. 82. Offered by Mr. Self of Texas. Page six. Line six.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:14:42] The objection for the reading of the amendments dispensed with. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for five minutes on his amendment.

**Rep. Keith Self (R-TX-3):** [00:14:48] Uh, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me be clear. I support my colleague, Mr. Smith, in House res 82. My amendment simply strikes the second paragraph of the resolved text. I do not believe that the Department of State needs another special envoy with the rank of ambassador. I'll note that there is an ambassador pending in the Senate, and frankly, that would be sufficient in this case. It also indicates that the administration is not that interested in Nigeria, uh, unlike my colleagues across the aisle suggesting or he would push for that ambassador to be confirmed. As of May, the State Department maintained 23 special envoys, 13 special representatives, 11 coordinators, eight advisors, eight ambassadors at large, and seven similar officials with uh, like titles uh, that 70 uh, with the rank of ambassador, similar rank of ambassador, including a confirmed ambassador at large for international religious freedom. Our federal government needs to shrink, not expand. I'm not interested in giving the State Department another ambassadorial position. It needs to become more efficient, not more unwieldy. I am concerned that this proliferation of special envoys leads to

more bureaucracy, more duplication, and less efficient government. Uh, I fully agree with the substance of this resolution. As I say, more Christians are killed, abducted or attacked in their home or business than any other country in Nigeria. I signed the Huizinga letter on this issue, oh, a month or so ago. Uh, but I agree that the administration has turned a blind eye to the crisis. The State Department, the State Department inexplicably removed Nigeria from its special watch list as a country of particular concern in 2021. Specifically removed. Nigeria receives over \$1 billion in US aid, and the State Department needs to reverse their course and begin pressuring the government of Nigeria to end the persecution of Christians, regardless of who is doing the persecution. But this doesn't require a special envoy. It requires a confirmed ambassador in Nigeria and a change of focus and priority in Washington. I ask that my amendment be adopted. With that, I yield back.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:17:17] And yields back to the other members.

**Rnk. Member Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY-5):** [00:17:23] I want to thank Representative Self for offering this amendment, which I support, to strike the Special Envoy position. The call for a Special Envoy for Nigeria and the Lake Chad region is premature at this time, especially as he gentleman indicated, we don't currently have a US ambassador confirmed to Nigeria. We should first ensure we have full diplomatic representation in Nigeria and empower our ambassador to address these issues with the Government of Nigeria and other stakeholders. So I support the gentleman's amendment, but it does not address my underlying concern with the resolution, which I will oppose in a final vote. And I yield back.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:18:13] The gentleman yields. Any other members seek recognition.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:18:16] Chairman.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:18:16] Mr. Smith.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:18:16] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Uh, first of all, I want to thank Mr. Self for his support for the CPC designation. And I would remind my colleagues that when we and Frank Wolff's law. Uh, but I worked very hard on it. We created A2A couple of



important points. The CPC is the first part, based on the evidence designated a country every year. Uh, whether or not it is violates international religious freedom. Uh, and the standards that are embedded in the bill or the law. The second is the sanctioning, and that is the exclusive domain of the administration. Once they put a country on it, they now have about 18 or so different, uh, action items that they could implement, starting with the simple démarche, but also some very significant, uh, penalties. And that does get the attention of a country and helps them to prioritize, uh, are they going to do something or not? The idea and with all due respect to my good friend from New York, that we have no ambassador and I. That's unfortunate. Uh, but all the more reason why we need a special envoy. Uh, we do not have we have a DCM. We got a number two, but we do not have a person walking point in Abuja, uh, on this or any other issue, because there is no ambassador, whatever the fault is.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4): [00:19:28]** That's not what we're talking about. We need, uh, a special envoy to really take this issue and focus on it, bring all the disparate elements together. Uh, and, you know, I've worked with special envoys over the years in many places around the world, in Sudan and South Sudan. We worked with Princeton Lyman, who did an outstanding job in bringing all those warring efforts and personages together. Uh, Booth South, uh, Donald Booth, who also did an amazing job as well. And that becomes someone who that's all they do. One of the problems with our State Department, and you could understand why, is that they have all a huge portfolio that they have to deal with huge, uh, religious freedom, maybe on page two or 3 or 4, we saw that with trafficking. I wrote the trafficking laws for the United States of America Trafficking Victims Protection Act because we were not. I say, again, not focusing on that in our embassies and as a government. And now, similar to the Religious Freedom Act, we have actionable items. We put people on tier one, two and three, three being the worst. And boy, does that sharpen the mind. When a country is put on tier three and they get off it? Uh, yeah.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4): [00:20:38]** They got to make changes. They have to do reforms, initiate prosecutions, do protection and prevention efforts. Same here. CPC is very similar. Uh, and again, when we created the US Commission on Religious Freedom, it was precisely because other issues might interfere with the US Department of State calling balls and strikes correctly. And that is what we've seen here. Other things take advantage of it. You know, the US Commission on Religious Freedom is an independent, bipartisan watchdog that

does an amazing job in pointing out what is going on. State of religious freedom, uh, in country X, Y and Z, including Nigeria, and then making recommendations. We should hear their recommendations, uh, and listen to them in terms of telling the administration we're admonishing the administration to do this. We have every right, I would say, every duty, knowing that Christians and Muslims are being slaughtered, uh, to and put into prison for blasphemy, uh, to do just that, I visited churches that were firebombed in Jos, Nigeria, along with Archbishop Kaigama (Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, Catholic Archbishop of Abuja) some years ago. I met with the Islamic leaders. They were amazing people. They get along. They're friends, like so many other moderate Muslims in Nigeria, with the bishops and the clergy that are here today and others.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:21:55] It is this radicalized group, uh, whether it be ISIS, West Africa, whether it be Boko Haram or the Fulani, you know, the Fulani have now become a major in the middle of a middle belt area, a major, major, uh, killer of Christians, you know, 2 to 300, 300 is probably the best estimate murdered on Christmas Eve. And then who died thereafter? Uh, and we're not outraged. I am, and I'm tired of us saying, oh, you know, let's just allow normal diplomacy to take its course. The president of Nigeria will not do if he's told no CPC. And I would say to the Secretary of State when he went to Abuja because they had CPC designation, they being Nigeria. When he went there, he shocked everyone when he just unilaterally said, you don't have it anymore. The church leaders. Issued strong statements of protest, as did I, as did Yusuf and so many others. So we need to be very clear. We really want to make a difference here. Special envoys, I do believe, uh, you don't want a thousand of them. You want ones that are really, really focused. This could help bring, uh, religious freedom to a better place and to stop the killing fields. As Genocide Watch has talked about in Nigeria, I yield back.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:23:12] Gentleman yields back. Any other member seek recognition, Mister Connolly?

**Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11):** [00:23:16] Thank you. Mister chairman, I have a question for my friend from new Jersey. I certainly have always admired his passion. Um, and I hear his outrage. So does that outrage extend to the rights of gay and lesbian individuals in the country? We're talking about.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:23:35] In Nigeria, we're talking about people being slaughtered by at least three or more radical Islamist organizations. We're talking about Muslims being put into prison. We are dealing with those issues here right now. I don't believe in violence against anyone. But this resolution is about the violence that is being visited upon innocent people in Nigeria.

**Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11):** [00:23:58] Well, if I could further ask, uh, there have been statements made by religious leaders, including in the Christian community, who have called for, uh, the death penalty for people.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:24:11] I'm not for it. What's that? I'm not for it. The death penalty. I'm not for the death penalty in this country. Right. Anything.

**Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11):** [00:24:17] You're a you're a consistent Catholic. Thank you. However, I just want to make the point that if we're we have to be consistent. If we are concerned about the violation of human rights and the right of human autonomy, uh, and freedom, and we should be, that has to be consistent. It can't simply be one group, but not another. Um, and I thank my friend, and I hope his outrage will, uh, extend to other groups that need our consideration and protection, I yield back.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:24:51] Gentleman yields. Any other member seek recognition? Mr. Perry's recognized.

**Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10):** [00:24:55] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm considering the. The Self amendment because. I don't think. Look, I think it's the State Department's job to do this work. And while I applaud my friend from new Jersey on his efforts here to draw attention to what's happening in Nigeria, rightly so. Um, the fact of the matter is, is what's been unsaid around here. What's being unsaid in this markup is the fact that my friends on the other side of the aisle. Aren't acknowledging the Christian slaughter that is happening in Nigeria and trying to water it down and elevate other things that have nothing to do with religious freedom and trying to bring them into this conversation. This is about religious freedom. That's what the markup, that's what the bill is about. Now, we might disagree. I might disagree on whether we

need a special envoy. Because I don't want to pay for one, because the State Department should be doing this job. But the fact remains that the conversation is being had because this administration is turning its back on Christians all around the globe, particularly in Nigeria and quite honestly in this country as well, in this country as well. But that's not the conversation we're having today. The State Department omitted Nigerian Nigeria from the CPC list in 2021 and 2022, and then the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, as the gentleman from new Jersey pointed out, recommended the State Department to designate Nigeria as a CPC, finding the De-list decision to be inexplicable. Inexplicable. It couldn't explain it.

**Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10):** [00:26:43] Well, let me explain it to you. Ladies and gentlemen. My friends on the other side of the aisle are at war with Christianity. They're at war with it, whether it happens in this country or in Nigeria. But they just don't want to say it. And so they're going to be opposed to the bill for numerous different reasons, because it doesn't support this group's right or that group right. Group's right that have absolutely nothing to do with religious freedom, and they're going to try and muddy the water and make you believe that they actually care about this issue when they absolutely do not. So I'm going to ruminate on my decision about Mister Self's amendment, because I don't think that we need a special envoy. What we need, what this country should have, what Nigeria should have, what the world should have, is a United States of America and an administration that stands up for religious, religious freedom around the globe, including Christianity. That's what's needed now. This is a band aid. This is a this is the attempt that we can make because none of us here are president. But this drug does draw attention, rightly so, to the issue at hand, which I've enumerated for you uncomfortably here today. But it has to be said. Somebody has to say it. And that's what's really happening here. And so you must also know that Christians in Nigeria are 7.6 times more likely to be targeted and killed.

**Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11):** [00:28:16] Would my friend yield?

**Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10):** [00:28:17] Negative, Mr. Connolly. My good friend from Virginia. I think I've heard enough from you on this issue. Six times more Christians are abducted than Muslims.

[00:28:26] How dare you. You just smeared people on this side of the aisle, and I.

**Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10):** [00:28:34] Mr. Connolly, I have the microphone. Yeah.

**Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11):** [00:28:37] And you're smearing, smearing with it.

**Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10):** [00:28:38] Thank you, sir. Thank you.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:28:40] Yeah. The time is, uh.

**Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10):** [00:28:43] Well, if the time is expired, it's with you.

**Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10):** [00:28:45] So I just want to continue the point here that this bill. That this legislation seeks to highlight the problem that exists about religious freedom and Christianity in particular. Don't allow yourselves to be swayed and to be duped by the muddying of the waters. And by the obfuscation of some, maybe not in the room, maybe in the room. Maybe that will help. Um. Who seek to. Who seek to dupe everybody here about what's really what's truly what's absolutely happening with that. Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:29:28] Gentlemen. The gentleman yields. Do any other member seek recognition? Miss Wild is recognized.

**Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA-7):** [00:29:40] Thank you. I yield my time to Mr. Connolly.

**Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11):** [00:29:43] I thank my friend. And I'm sorry my other friend from Pennsylvania wouldn't yield time when you make a charge that a group of colleagues don't care about atrocities against Christians. I think you should take great care. And I consider that a smear. My colleague may not know. This Democrat studied for the Roman Catholic priesthood. I was in the seminary for six years. My wife was a former Roman Catholic nun. We grew up in the social justice doctrine of the Catholic Church, we were imbued with concern for Christian values. That could have universality. All of my life has been imbued and infused by those values. When I was a young man and my wife the same. And I take great exception to anybody who would actually question the motivation. And in fact judge it. And I would have made this point had my friend yielded. But I thank Miss Wild for allowing me to make that

point, and I hope as we proceed, we will take more care about personally impugning the motives of colleagues in this committee. We can disagree without having our motivation questioned. And that's a pretty profound and powerful dynamic with this member of Congress, given my background and my history and my commitment, and I'm not alone, I thank Susan, Miss Wild, for yielding and yield back to her.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:31:37] Gentleman yields. Any member seek recognition.

**Rep. Aumua Radewagen (R-AL-AS):** [00:31:40] Mr. chairman, I seek recognition. I would like to yield.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:31:43] Ms. Radewagen is recognized.

**Rep. Aumua Radewagen (R-AL-AS):** [00:31:46] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to yield my time to Mr. Smith.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:31:50] Thank you. I won't take the full time. And I thank my good friend for yielding. I just want to remind my colleagues that special envoys and special representatives had made a huge difference all over the globe. I'm not for, you know, just saying. Oh, do it for this. Do it for that. There is a compelling need for such a special envoy. We would not have had an agreement on Northern Ireland. And I worked very hard on that. Chaired 16 hearings. I went there many times to Belfast. I had it not been for the special envoy, and that was during the Clinton administration that cobbled together, got the very, very warring factions together in Northern Ireland to that ended up with the peace agreement. And so special envoys can play a serious and I think an outsized positive role, uh, especially in this case when they're focused on religious freedom. We have an ambassador at large for religious freedom. He's a very good man, Hussein. I meet with him all the time. He's very he was at our hearing, too, along with the US Commission on Religious Freedom. And he is very sympathetic to everything we're saying about Nigeria. He didn't say put CPC on. He if he did, he'd be fired. Uh, but the independent commission, no, the Religious Freedom Commission has no such concerns about that.

**Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4):** [00:33:02] They are independent. They're bipartisan, picked by the House and Senate leadership. Uh, as to who serves on that, and they are unequivocal in their support for CPC, for Nigeria, unequivocal that there needs to be a special envoy to really work this issue. And again, to my good friend Mr. Meeks, not having an ambassador in Abuja, a US ambassador, really makes it so that we need more than ever, you know, to really get that focus 24 over seven, seven days a week working with all these factions. Uh, you know, I'm the one who wrote the law in 2016 that finally put, uh, entities of particular concern like Boko Haram on that list. Uh, but the government is responsible. The buck stops there and they're not doing what they can be doing, and their indifference is numbing. Uh, and so I do hope, I do hope that this amendment would be rejected. Uh, I do think we need a special envoy. Again. Look at Northern Ireland. Look at all these other issues. Look at South Sudan and Sudan. Yes, it's acting up again. Uh, there are problems there once again. But the only reason we get peace agreements or cessation of hostilities and murder and terrorism, to some degree, uh, they are a major reason why that does happen. So I thank my good friend for yielding and yield.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:34:18] Gentleman yields. Uh, any other member seek recognition? Mr. Moran is recognized.

**Rep. Nathaniel Moran (R-TX-1):** [00:34:25] Mr. chairman, I seek recognition to yield my time to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry.

**Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10):** [00:34:31] Well, I thank the gentleman for yielding the time, and I want to address my good friend from Virginia. My intent is not to and was not to. Um. Impugn your character. But I would say this. The Secretary of State, the current secretary of State under the Biden administration, stated in his first few months. That this administration does not plan to prioritize religious freedom. Does not plan to prioritize religious freedom. You can say anything you want to. Ladies and gentlemen, talk is cheap. As we say. Back at where I live. There was something else that follows that will leave that out. But talk is cheap. It's your actions that matter. It's your actions. And. For goodness sake. This administration has found a way has seen fit to have a special envoy for climate change. For climate change. That you would think. Like I said, I got a problem with all these special envoys. Just let the State Department do what it's supposed to do. Let the administration lead where it's supposed to lead. And that's okay. They've told us not by their words, but by their actions, what's important to them and

what's not important to them. That's all I'm doing, is pointing that out. I don't mean to offend anybody, but if you're offended by the facts, then be offended.

**Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10):** [00:35:53] Then be offended, I think. So if we can have a special envoy for climate change. Well, again, I think that speaks volumes in terms of what we don't have for religious freedom. And I would just say this we're actions speak louder than words. It's not my actions. But just yesterday, the president of the United States issued a veto threat. On support for the funding package that he advocated for the nation of Israel. Now you can say whatever you want. You can say, well, I support Israel. But in this instance, it seems to me your actions. Speak very loudly. And that's just another example. Again, my intent is not to offend. My intent is to give you the facts. And if they offend you, well. Then I guess you should be offended. Religious freedom is an issue in Nigeria. It is an issue now. Maybe climate change is too. Maybe it is. But I guarantee you religious freedom is an issue. These folks traveled from Nigeria to be here to let us know that. To let us know that. And we on this side hear you loud and clear. With that, I yield the balance back to the gentleman, Mr. Moran.

**Rep. Nathaniel Moran (R-TX-1):** [00:37:18] Thank you, Mr. Perry. And I yield to the gentleman from Texas. Mr. Self.

**Rep. Keith Self (R-TX-3):** [00:37:23] I will point out that a special envoy, the actual text of the bill says, should promptly appoint a person of recognized distinction in the fields of religious freedom and human rights as the special envoy. Uh, the we don't even have an ambassador in Nigeria and this does not say shell it said, should promptly appoint. I have absolutely no confidence that even should this bill pass, uh, that the president will appoint a special envoy. Uh, hence, I don't think that we ought to be deluding ourselves. We need to disabuse ourselves of the idea that this president will do this, and I yield back.

**Rep. Nathaniel Moran (R-TX-1):** [00:38:02] Thank you, Mr. Self. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:38:05] The gentleman yields. Any other member seek recognition. There would be no further discussion. The question now occurs on the amendment offered by Representative Self, number 69 to the amendment, in the nature of a substitute. All



those in favor signify by saying aye. Aye. All those opposed signify by saying no. No. In the opinion of the chair, the noes have it. The amendment is not agreed to.

**Rep. Keith Self (R-TX-3):** [00:38:27] Mr. chairman, I request the yeas and nays.

**Chair Michael McCaul (R-TX-10):** [00:38:29] Roll call vote has been requested pursuant to the chair's previous announcement. This vote will be postponed. There being no further amendments further proceeding on this bill is postponed.