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**Congress of the United States**  
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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

## The Frank Wolf Int'l Religious Freedom Act (HR 1150)

*U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (NJ-04)*  
*Excerpts of Remarks*  
*Markup of bills, including Smith legislation H.R.4678*  
*House Foreign Affairs Committee*  
*Washington, D.C.*  
*April 20, 2016*

Eighteen years ago, Congress had the foresight to make advancing the right to religious freedom a U.S. foreign policy priority. Eighteen years have passed and religion is even more relevant today as a foreign policy issue than it was when the original International Religious Freedom Act was signed into law.

The world is experiencing an unprecedented crisis of international religious freedom, a crisis that continues to create millions of victims; a crisis that undermines liberty, prosperity and peace; a crisis that poses a direct challenge to the U.S. interests in the Middle East, Russia, China and sub-Saharan Africa.

The bill we passed almost 18 years ago needs to be updated to match the challenges of the 21st century. That is what we are doing with this bill—the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act. We honor the author of the landmark 1998 legislation and upgrade the tools, training, and resources used by the Administration to advance this fundamental freedom.

It is increasingly clear that a robust religious freedom diplomacy is necessary to advance US interest in stability, security, and economic development. Research shows that where there is more religious freedom, there is more economic freedom, more women's empowerment, more political stability, more freedom of speech, and less terrorism.

This legislation was co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of more than 100 members of Congress. It is also supported by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the International Religious Freedom Roundtable, a diverse and ecumenical group of religious communities, ethnic groups and nongovernmental organizations.

In a letter sent to all members of Congress, the Roundtable endorsed the legislation, saying, “While there is very little we agree on theologically, or politically, we all agree that ... the passage and implementation of HR 1150 ... will send a clear and urgent message regarding the inherent dignity of every human being, as well as our common global security in the fight against religious persecution, extremism, and terrorism.”

I want to thank Rep. Anna Eshoo for being an original co-sponsor and strong supporter of this bill. Her advocacy on behalf of religious minorities in the Middle East is important and critical work. I value her partnership on this legislation.

I also want to thank Chairman Royce and his staff for helping to move this legislation to mark-up and thank you also to ranking member Engel and his staff for engaging on this legislation and making it an effort of bipartisan cooperation.

### **Statement on The Strategy to Oppose Organ Trafficking Act (H.R. 3694)**

I would like to commend Mr. Trott, and his staff for their fine work crafting H.R. 3694, the Strategy to Oppose Organ Trafficking Act.

This Act officially recognizes a growing manifestation of human trafficking—that of trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal, and calls on the Department of State to develop a new report on this issue as well as a strategy to combat it. We have long heard rumors and horror stories of migrants held captive in sub-Saharan Africa and the Sinai Peninsula, their organs taken and their bodies dumped because their families could not afford ransom.

As noted briefly by the Trafficking in Persons Report last year, we have evidence that organs continue to be harvested without consent from some Falun Gong detainees and other prisoners in China.

Recent evidence from researchers Ethan Guttman and David Matas shows that the organ transplants in China have increased, not decreased. There is a surprising abundance of available organs in China's military hospitals and China's transplant apparatus can tissue match and find an organ for transplant within two weeks for any foreign organ tourist with cash.

The new report required by Mr. Trott's bill will require the State Department to do a more thorough analysis of trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal in China and elsewhere, informing a strategy to stop this crime against humanity.

Indeed, I would warn any American traveling to China for an organ transplant in 2016—you may be participating in human trafficking of a vulnerable person or prisoner.

H.R. 3694 will also help ensure that Americans be certain they are receiving transplants only in countries that prohibit and actively prevent organ harvesting from trafficked individuals—rather than turn a blind eye to the ambiguous origins of the proffered organ.

It is time this issue was brought into the spotlight, and halted. I am proud to support H.R. 3694 as a cosponsor. Again, I commend Mr. Trott for this legislation.

### **Statement: Reaffirm Taiwan Relations Act (H. Con. Res. 88) & The U.S.-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act (H.R. 2939)**

I'd like to applaud my friend Steve Chabot for introducing a resolution reaffirming the importance of the Taiwan Relations Act and underscoring the ties that we share with this bastion of democracy. I also thank our Ranking Member, Eliot Engel, for his Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act.

I believe this Act will help us counter the malign influence Venezuela has in the region, and encourage greater trade and enhanced ties with our neighbors in the Caribbean.