

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1885

A RESOLUTION in support of religious freedom for Coptic Christians.

WHEREAS, Coptic Christians are a Christian minority comprising approximately 10% of the Egyptian population and are an integral part of Egyptian society; and

WHEREAS, Egypt's Coptic Christian population is a victim of a systematic pattern of violence, including attacks as recently as January 6, 2010; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of State's 2009 Report on International Religious Freedom states that the status of the Egyptian government's respect for religious freedom "declined somewhat during the reporting period based on a failure to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of increased incidents of sectarian violence"; and

WHEREAS, Christian groups are required to have government permission to build or repair a church. The approval process for church construction is time-consuming and inflexible, and applicants often do not receive a response. Permits that have been approved, in some cases, cannot be acted upon because of interference by the state security services at both the local and national levels; and

WHEREAS, Christians and other minority religious practitioners fear government harassment if they officially register their religion on national identification cards; and

WHEREAS, The foundation of the United States Constitution and the Kansas Constitution are freedom and justice: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas:* That the Senate of the State of Kansas urges the Egyptian government to provide better protection for the Coptic Christian population by investigating and prosecuting those who perpetrate violence against Coptic Christians, by compensating victims of such violence and by protecting and preserving Coptic Christian places of worship; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Senate of the State of Kansas urges the Egyptian government to stop discriminatory practices that affect the Coptic Christian population, including the difficulty in building and repairing places of worship, the lack of representation in certain government bodies and the continued harassment of converts; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Senate of the State of Kansas urges the Egyptian government to ensure that all places of worship are subject to the same transparent, non-discriminatory and efficient regulations regarding construction and maintenance; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Senate of the State of Kansas urges the Egyptian government to ensure that every Egyptian is protected against discrimination in social, labor and other rights by modifying the national identity card either to omit mention of religious affiliation or make optional any mention of religious affiliation; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Senate of the State of Kansas urges the Egyptian government to prevent incidences of religious intolerance by providing equal protection of the law and equal rights for all Egyptians, and by effectively prosecuting any such incidents that occur; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send enrolled copies of this resolution to the United States Secretary of State and the Kansas Congressional delegation.

Senate Resolution No. 1885 was sponsored by Senators Pilcher-Cook, Brownlee, Bruce, Kelsey, Masterson, Ostmeyer, Petersen, Taddiken and Wagle.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

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*President of the Senate.*

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*Secretary of the Senate.*