



**Legislative Bulletin.....March 29, 2006**

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**H.Res. 736**—Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that legal action in Afghanistan against citizens who have already converted or plan to convert to other religions is deplorable and unjust

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**Summary of the Bills Under Consideration Today:**

**Total Number of New Government Programs:** 0

**Total Cost of Discretionary Authorizations:** \$0

**Effect on Revenue:** \$0

**Total Change in Mandatory Spending:** \$0

**Total New State & Local Government Mandates:** 0

**Total New Private Sector Mandates:** 0

**Number of Bills Without Committee Reports:** 0

**Number of Reported Bills that Don't Cite Specific Clauses of Constitutional Authority:** 0

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**H.Res. 736**—Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that legal action in Afghanistan against citizens who have already converted or plan to convert to other religions is deplorable and unjust (Pence, R-IN)

**Order of Business:** The resolution is scheduled to be considered on Wednesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution.

**Summary:** H.Res. 736 would resolve that the House:

- “condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the enforcement of laws against apostasy;

- “requests the President to continue to work with the Government of Afghanistan to establish better protections for religious minorities, including converts to minority religions, and to enhance human rights protections in Afghanistan; and
- “calls upon the Government of Afghanistan, and especially President Hamid Karzai, to continue to conform Afghan laws to Afghanistan’s international human rights treaty obligations, thereby protecting Afghan citizens who have converted or plan to convert to other religions from prosecution.”

**Additional Background:** Abdul Rahman, an Afghan man who left Afghanistan and converted to Christianity 16 years ago, was arrested (and faces the death penalty) for this religious conversion since returning to Afghanistan (where the law is based on Islamic law). Although Rahman has since been released from prison, he apparently is still subject to psychological evaluation for leaving Islam and becoming a Christian. Rahman has asked for asylum in a Western nation. Media reports indicate that Italy is a destination of interest at this time.

The resolution notes that Afghanistan has agreed to abide by international agreements protecting the freedom of religion. Additionally, the resolution notes that “the United States, at great cost in blood and treasure, helped the people of Afghanistan liberate themselves from the tyranny of the Taliban and adopt free institutions and practices, including respect for rule of law and internationally recognized human rights.”

**Committee Action:** The resolution was introduced on Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, and referred to the International Relations Committee, which took no official action.

**Administration Position:** Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has been quoted in the media saying, “We’ve been very clear with the Afghan government that it has to understand the vital importance of religious freedom to democracy.”

**Cost to Taxpayers:** The resolution would authorize no expenditure.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?:** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?:** No.

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