

**AMENDMENT**  
**TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 116–19**  
**OFFERED BY MR. FORTENBERRY OF NEBRASKA**

At the end of subtitle C of title XII, insert the following:

1 **SEC. 12\_\_\_ . SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SUPPORTING THE RE-**  
2 **TURN AND REPATRIATION OF RELIGIOUS**  
3 **AND ETHNIC MINORITIES IN IRAQ TO THEIR**  
4 **ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS.**

5 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

6 (1) the Nineveh Plain and the wider region  
7 have been the ancestral homeland of Assyrian  
8 Chaldean Syriac Christians, Yazidis, Shabak, and  
9 other religious and ethnic minorities, where they  
10 lived for centuries until the Islamic State of Iraq  
11 and Syria (ISIS) overran and occupied the area in  
12 2014;

13 (2) in 2016, then-Secretary of State John  
14 Kerry announced, “In my judgment Daesh is re-  
15 sponsible for genocide against groups in areas under  
16 its control, including Yezidis, Christians, and Shia  
17 Muslims. Daesh is genocidal by self-proclamation, by  
18 ideology, and by actions—in what it says, what it

1 believes, and what it does. Daesh is also responsible  
2 for crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing di-  
3 rected at these same groups and in some cases also  
4 against Sunni Muslims, Kurds, and other minori-  
5 ties.”;

6 (3) these atrocities were undertaken with the  
7 specific intent to bring about the eradication and  
8 displacement of Christians, Yazidis, and other com-  
9 munities and the destruction of their cultural herit-  
10 age, in violation of the United Nations Convention  
11 on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of  
12 Genocide signed by the United States on December  
13 11, 1948;

14 (4) in 2016, the House of Representatives  
15 passed H. Con. Res. 75 expressing the sense of the  
16 House of Representatives that the atrocities per-  
17 petrated by ISIS against religious and ethnic minori-  
18 ties in Iraq and Syria include war crimes, crimes  
19 against humanity, and genocide;

20 (5) through joint efforts of the United States  
21 and 79 allies and partners, ISIS has been terri-  
22 torially defeated in Iraq and Syria;

23 (6) in July 2018, under the direction of Vice  
24 President Pence, the Genocide Recovery and Perse-  
25 cution Response Program partnered with the De-

1       partment of State, the United States Agency for  
2       International Development, and local faith and com-  
3       munity leaders to rapidly and directly deliver aid to  
4       persecuted communities, beginning with Iraq;

5           (7) Christians in Iraq once numbered over 1.5  
6       million in 2003 and have dwindled to less than  
7       200,000 today;

8           (8) armed militia groups linked to Iran, oper-  
9       ating systematically in Sinjar and the Nineveh  
10      Plains, have harassed and intimidated religious and  
11      ethnic minorities thereby destabilizing northern Iraq  
12      and preventing local and indigenous minorities to re-  
13      turn to their homelands;

14          (9) Iraqi religious minorities have faced chal-  
15      lenges in integrating into the Iraqi Security Forces  
16      and Kurdish Peshmerga;

17          (10) over 500 acres of productive agricultural  
18      lands in eastern Ninevah Governate have been  
19      burned in cases of arson in May 2019 alone, de-  
20      stroying significant wheat and barley cultivation  
21      areas;

22          (11) these agricultural resources are critical to  
23      northern Iraq's livelihood, especially that of minority  
24      populations, and continued crop arson prevents safe

1 and prosperous return of minority populations as  
2 well as complicates stabilization efforts; and

3 (12) facilitating the success of communities in  
4 Sinjar and the Nineveh Plains requires a commit-  
5 ment from international, Iraqi, Kurdish, and local  
6 authorities, in partnership with local faith leaders, to  
7 promote the safety and security of all people, espe-  
8 cially religious and ethnic minorities.

9 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
10 gress that—

11 (1) it should remain a policy priority of the  
12 United States, working with international partners,  
13 the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional  
14 Government, and local populations, to support the  
15 safe return of displaced indigenous people of the  
16 Nineveh Plain and Sinjar to their ancestral home-  
17 land;

18 (2) it should be a policy priority of the Govern-  
19 ment of Iraq, the Kurdish Regional Government, the  
20 United States, and the international community to  
21 guarantee the restoration of fundamental human  
22 rights, including property rights, to genocide victims,  
23 and to see that ethnic and religious pluralism sur-  
24 vives in Iraq;

1           (3) Iraqi Security Forces and the Kurdish  
2 Peshmerga should work to more fully integrate all  
3 communities, including religious minority commu-  
4 nities, to counter current and future terrorist  
5 threats; and

6           (4) the United States, working with inter-  
7 national allies and partners, should continue to lead  
8 coordination of efforts to provide for the safe return  
9 and future security of religious minorities in the  
10 Nineveh Plain and Sinjar.

