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:

SEC. 12. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SUPPORTING THE RETURN AND REPATRIATION OF RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES IN IRAQ TO THEIR ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

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

(2) in 2016, then-Secretary of State John Kerry announced, “In my judgment Daesh is responsible for genocide against groups in areas under its control, including Yezidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims. Daesh is genocidal by self-proclamation, by ideology, and by actions—in what it says, what it
believes, and what it does. Daesh is also responsible
for crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing di-
rected at these same groups and in some cases also
against Sunni Muslims, Kurds, and other minori-
ties.”;

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

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

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

(6) in July 2018, under the direction of Vice
President Pence, the Genocide Recovery and Perse-
cution Response Program partnered with the De-
partment of State, the United States Agency for International Development, and local faith and community leaders to rapidly and directly deliver aid to persecuted communities, beginning with Iraq;

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

(8) armed militia groups linked to Iran, operating systematically in Sinjar and the Nineveh Plains, have harassed and intimidated religious and ethnic minorities thereby destabilizing northern Iraq and preventing local and indigenous minorities to return to their homelands;

(9) Iraqi religious minorities have faced challenges in integrating into the Iraqi Security Forces and Kurdish Peshmerga;

(10) over 500 acres of productive agricultural lands in eastern Ninevah Governate have been burned in cases of arson in May 2019 alone, destroying significant wheat and barley cultivation areas;

(11) these agricultural resources are critical to northern Iraq’s livelihood, especially that of minority populations, and continued crop arson prevents safe...
and prosperous return of minority populations as well as complicates stabilization efforts; and

(12) facilitating the success of communities in Sinjar and the Nineveh Plains requires a commitment from international, Iraqi, Kurdish, and local authorities, in partnership with local faith leaders, to promote the safety and security of all people, especially religious and ethnic minorities.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) it should remain a policy priority of the United States, working with international partners, the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government, and local populations, to support the safe return of displaced indigenous people of the Nineveh Plain and Sinjar to their ancestral homeland;

(2) it should be a policy priority of the Government of Iraq, the Kurdish Regional Government, the United States, and the international community to guarantee the restoration of fundamental human rights, including property rights, to genocide victims, and to see that ethnic and religious pluralism survives in Iraq;
(3) Iraqi Security Forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga should work to more fully integrate all communities, including religious minority communities, to counter current and future terrorist threats; and

(4) the United States, working with international allies and partners, should continue to lead coordination of efforts to provide for the safe return and future security of religious minorities in the Nineveh Plain and Sinjar.