

LIBERTY AT RISK

On March 25, by a vote of 31-5 with one abstention, the House International Relations Committee voted to accept the Religious Persecution Act (H.R. 2431). Congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia, who is spearheading this important legislation, is determined to stop the existing practice of allowing nations that practice religious persecution to get off scot-free. The Catholic League has formally endorsed the bill.

Unfortunately, attempts are under way to weaken some of the most important provisions of the bill. For example, some want to allow taxpayer dollars to continue to finance trade with offending regimes through the Export-Import Bank, the Trade and Development Agency and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Others are seeking to remove safeguards for individuals seeking asylum in the U.S. because they are fleeing religious persecution.

The three most important Congressmen that members can write to on this issue are House Speaker Newt Gingrich, House Majority Leader Richard Armey and House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt. Write to them at the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington D.C. 20515. A vote is scheduled soon.