

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 28

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
2 STATING FINDINGS OF THE LEGISLATURE AND RECOGNIZING AND DESIGNATING JANUARY
3 16 AS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM DAY, SUPPORTING IDAHO'S CONSTITUTIONAL GUAR-
4 ANTY OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE PRINCIPLES SET FORTH THEREIN THAT THE
5 EXERCISE AND ENJOYMENT OF RELIGIOUS FAITH AND WORSHIP SHALL FOREVER BE
6 GUARANTEED, THAT NO PERSON SHALL BE DENIED ANY CIVIL OR POLITICAL RIGHT,
7 PRIVILEGE, OR CAPACITY ON ACCOUNT OF HIS RELIGIOUS OPINIONS, THAT NO
8 PERSON SHALL BE REQUIRED TO ATTEND OR SUPPORT ANY MINISTRY OR PLACE OF
9 WORSHIP, RELIGIOUS SECT, OR DENOMINATION, OR PAY TITHES AGAINST HIS
10 CONSENT, AND THAT NO PREFERENCE BE GIVEN BY LAW TO ANY RELIGIOUS DENOMI-
11 NATION OR MODE OF WORSHIP.

12 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

13 WHEREAS, Congress designated January 16 as Religious Freedom Day in
14 1992, stipulating that it be commemorated by a presidential proclamation,
15 to celebrate the enactment of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
16 on January 16, 1786. Written by Thomas Jefferson and championed by James
17 Madison, this legislation was the forerunner to the approach to religion and
18 government taken by the framers of the Constitution in 1787 and the First
19 Amendment in 1789. The Virginia statute declared: "... all men shall be
20 free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of
21 religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect
22 their civil capacities." Jefferson later said that religious freedom encom-
23 passes "the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan, the Hindoo, and
24 infidel of every denomination"; and

25 WHEREAS, Section 4, Article I, of the Constitution of the State of
26 Idaho, guarantees religious liberty and provides in part: "The exercise and
27 enjoyment of religious faith and worship shall forever be guaranteed; and no
28 person shall be denied any civil or political right, privilege, or capacity
29 on account of his religious opinions; ... No person shall be required to
30 attend or support any ministry or place of worship, religious sect or denomi-
31 nation, or pay tithes against his consent; nor shall any preference be given
32 by law to any religious denomination or mode of worship."; and

33 WHEREAS, today religious freedom is a fundamental American and human
34 right and a cornerstone of democracy. It is not a privilege for the few, but a
35 right for all that applies to people of all and of no religious affiliations
36 or beliefs; and

37 WHEREAS, religious freedom encompasses equality as a guiding and gov-
38 erning principle. It requires that one's religious identity should be nei-
39 ther an advantage nor a disadvantage under the law; and

40 WHEREAS, these principles are not only foundational but remain essen-
41 tial to the health and future of our republic. To that end, these principles
42 should guide and inform judicial decisions, legislation, and public policy-
43 making at all levels of government.

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular Ses-
2 sion of the Sixty-fifth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and
3 the Senate concurring therein, that the Legislature recognizes and desig-
4 nates January 16 as Religious Freedom Day.

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we support Idaho's constitutional guaranty
6 of religious liberty and that we support the principles set forth therein
7 that the exercise and enjoyment of religious faith and worship shall forever
8 be guaranteed, that no person shall be denied any civil or political right,
9 privilege, or capacity on account of his religious opinions, that no person
10 shall be required to attend or support any ministry or place of worship, re-
11 ligious sect, or denomination, or pay tithes against his consent, and that no
12 preference be given by law to any religious denomination or mode of worship.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we recall the centrality of the Virginia
14 statute in shaping one of the highest aspirations of the American experi-
15 ment: religious freedom. We call on our fellow citizens to do the same.