



Special Envoy on Religious Freedom Bill Requires Immediate Action

Coptic Solidarity (CS) is launching an advocacy campaign to support Congressman Frank Wolf (VA-R) special envoy for religious freedom post and CS shares Congressman Wolf's concerns expressed in his [letter](#) (*) to Senator Jim Webb (D-VA).

The U.S. Senate urgently needs to pass S. 1245 that is currently held by Sen. Webb. The Bill would require that President Obama's administration appoint a Special Envoy for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia. H.R. 440 was a bipartisan bill introduced by Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA), and was passed by the House in 2011. Yet, Sen. Jim Webb is holding the bill in the Senate for reasons seem to be related to President Obama and State Department's policy in the region.

Washington Post [reported](#) on July 13 2012:

"In a position paper issued in response, State Department officials said "we oppose the bill as it infringes on the Secretary's flexibility to make appropriate staffing decisions," and suggested the duties of Wolf's proposed envoy would overlap with several existing positions. "The new special envoy position is unnecessary, duplicative, and likely counterproductive," the State Department said.

Lawmakers in America need to realize the strategic, long-term, negative implications of failing to address the dangers of the rise of religious totalitarianism currently advancing under the rule of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF), and their "civilian" allies from the of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), an international Islamist organization, in Egypt. The country appears to be moving towards either a Pakistani or Iranian model in which Islamists fully dominate government institutions. Clearly this type of government threatens basic freedoms and liberties in Egypt, as well as creates a security threat with far-reaching internal, regional and international implications, including to U.S. national security.

State Department and Sen. Webb's reasons still remain unclear as millions of Christians, Baha'is, non-Sunni Muslims and moderate Muslims are daily threatened and persecuted, and sometimes killed in Egypt and the region. And in addition, the international community should understand that advancing human and minority rights in Egypt, and countries with a similar socio-political situation in the region, must be a national security priority in order to effectively counter terrorism over the long term.

CS urges its members, friends and Virginia constituents to [contact](#) () Sen. Webb and communicate with his office the importance of Congressman Frank Wolf's request that he stops his hold on S. 1245. As Congressman Wolf stated in his letter: "Will a special envoy guarantee these communities' survival – and even flourishing – in the lands they have inhabited for centuries? I don't know. But I am certain that doing nothing is not an option."**

(*) http://wolf.house.gov/uploads/webb%20special%20env_20120711164533.pdf

(**) <http://www.webb.senate.gov/contact.cfm>