The European Union and the United States demonstrates that we can do even better. I commend my colleague Mr. BEREUTER for his efforts and leadership in bringing this important project to the Floor. It will improve our record even more through its representation of the voice of Congress.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Mr. HAYES. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. RES. 577, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM TO RELEASE FATHER THADDEUS NGUYEN VAN LY

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and submit an amendment to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 378) calling on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to immediately and unconditionally release Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 378

Whereas in February 2001, Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly, a Roman Catholic priest, was formally invited to testify before the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom but was denied permission to leave the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and thus, instead, submitted written testimony critical of Vietnam which was read into the Commission record on February 13.

Whereas Father Ly's testimony before the Commission documents numerous specific actions of the Government of Vietnam against religious freedom which he classified as collectively being "extremely cruel" and requiring a "non-violent and persistent campaign" to achieve full religious freedom for all people in Vietnam;

Whereas Father Ly has been detained by the Government of Vietnam since February 2001, when it placed Father Ly under administrative detention—as a direct response to his testimony, branding him a traitor for "alienating the Communist party's trust"—and, in doing so, "has seriously violated the religious freedom of the Government of Vietnam;

Whereas the Government of Vietnam issued a second decree suspending Father Ly's ability to "carry on any religious responsibility and functions" and later formally expelled him from his church, detained him, and denied him access to adequate legal counsel;

Whereas on October 19, 2001, the Thua Thien Hue Provincial People's Court convicted Father Ly of all charges after a one-day, closed trial, without the benefit of counsel and sentenced him to two years in prison for violating terms of his administrative detention, thirteen years in prison for "damaging the Government's unity policy," and 5 years of administrative probation upon release from prison;

Whereas after pleas from United States Government officials and the world community Father Ly's sentence was reduced by 6 years;

Whereas in June 2001, Father Ly's nephews Nguyen Vu Viet, age 27, and Nguyen Truc Cuong, age 36, and his niece Nguyen Thi Hoa, age 44, were arrested for allegedly being in contact and receiving support from organizations in the United States concerning the religious situation in Vietnam and disseminating information concerning the detention of Father Ly;

Whereas after their cases generated much concern in Congress, Nguyen Thi Hoa, Nguyen Vu Viet and Nguyen Truc Cuong all have been or are expected to be released shortly;

Whereas on November 27, 2003, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued Opinion No. 20/2003 stating "the Group is convinced that [Father Ly] has been arrested and detained solely for his opinions ... and of the liberties of Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly is arbitrary, as being in contravention of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;"

Whereas Father Ly has been deprived of his basic human rights by being denied his ability to exercise freedom of opinion and expression; and

Whereas the arbitrary imprisonment and the violation of the human rights of citizens of Vietnam are sources of continuing, grave concern to Congress;

Whereas continuing concerns regarding human rights in Vietnam were recently highlighted by large demonstrations in the Central Highlands on April 10 and 11, 2004, in which thousands of Montagnards gathered on Easter weekend to protest their treatment by the Government of Vietnam, including the confiscation of tribal lands and ongoing restrictions on religious activities; and

Whereas although the Government of Vietnam has not supplied information about the April 2004 protests and access to the Central Highlands, reputable human rights organizations have reported that the protests provoked severe governmental responses which injured, or are in hiding, and that others were killed; Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—

(1) Congress—

(A) condemns and deplors the arbitrary detention of Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for his immediate and unconditional release;

(B) condemns and deplors the violations of freedom of conscience and association, and the lack of due process afforded to individuals in Vietnam;

(C) strongly urges the Government of Vietnam to consider the implications of its actions for the broader relationship between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, including the impact on trade relations;

(D) urges the Government of Vietnam to allow unfettered access to the Central Highlands region by representatives of international human rights, press, and nongovernmental organizations; and

(E) condemns the extent of the violence used against Montagnard protesters on April 10 and 11, 2004, and the use of any violence against peaceful protests and demonstrations; and

(2) it is the sense of Congress that the United States—

(A) should make the immediate release of Father Ly a top concern;

(B) should continue to urge the Government of Vietnam to comply with internationally recognized standards for basic human rights and freedoms;

(C) should make it clear to the Government of Vietnam that the detention of Father Ly and other persons and the infringement of human rights violations individu-

uals are not in the interest of Vietnam because they cause obstacles to improved bilateral relations and cooperation with the United States; and

(D) should reiterate the deep concern of the United States regarding the continued imprisonment of Father Ly, and other persons whose human rights are being violated, and discuss their legal status and immediate humanitarian needs with the Government of Vietnam;

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) have 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Vietnam likes to say that Vietnam is a country, not a war. It is a catchy little self-evident phrase that some Members of Congress picked up during the bilateral trade agreement debate, as if to suggest that the debate was somehow about the Vietnam War, which it was not, instead of Vietnam's shameful present-day human rights record, which it was.

Of course Vietnam is a country, to which I respond: behave like an honorable country. Live up to their word as a signatory to numerous human rights covenants, including the international covenant on political and civil rights.

Stop bringing dishonor and shame to the government by abusing their own people.

Mr. Speaker, according to the U.S. State Department report, the "Report on Human Rights Practices for 2004": "The Government's human rights record remained poor, and it continued to commit serious abuses." Rather than repress and jail, harass, intimidate, and torture, the government should recognize and reflect its innate goodness of the Vietnamese people, a kind, gentle, compassionate people who deserve better, much better.

To take the case of Father Ly. In February 2001, Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly submitted written testimony to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom for a country at which he was invited to testify. He was not able to testify in person, but submitted written testimony which I will include in its entirety in the RECORD.

Because this brave Catholic priest told the truth, spoke the truth to power, the Government of Vietnam persecuted and cruelly mistreated him;
and he is now serving a 10-year prison sentence, and he has been in prison for 3 of those years. Amnesty International calls Father Ly a prisoner of conscience and even the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has condemned his detention.

I think it is worth focusing just for a moment on his testimony, which was included in his writing; and I quote it in part: “Since their victory of April 30, 1975,” Father Ly wrote, “the Vietnamesan Communists have extended its oppressive policy toward the different religions of South Vietnam. Laws and decrees have been promulgated to confine, restrict, or ban religious activities. The government has falsely accused clergy members and lay people as a pretext to detain and imprison those who protest its oppressive policy, or those who teach catechism, lead a church choir, or join a seminary. They have been banished to concentration camps for years. This policy has been ongoing,” he writes, “for nearly 50 years.”

“The government has used many ruses,” he continues to write, “to divide and politicize the Caoda, Catholic, and Protestant churches; to split the Buddhist Church in two, the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and the Buddhist Church of Vietnam; and to set up the puppet Hoa Hao Buddhist Church. The Benjamin Organization, which consists of mainly Communist cadres, to claim leadership over 5 million Hoa Hao Buddhists. The government has requisitioned for its arbitrary use numerous facilities and properties belonging to different churches.”

Father Ly continues to write: “With regard to the Catholic Church, the Communists have severely restricted her fundamental rights,” and he points out and lays out some 10 different instances, including the fact that the government still keeps many priests, clergy members, and lay people in prison or under house arrest.

Fear forces to say: “Faced with this extremely cruel policy of the Vietnamese Communist Government to strangle religions, the Churches in Vietnam have unceasingly demanded religious freedom. Their nonviolent and persistent campaign will continue until the Vietnamese people have full religious freedom, which anyone else in the civilized world has.”

This campaign has, as he points out, the following objectives. This is number one. This is Father Ly’s testimony: “Number one: the government must fully respect the right of all citizens to true religious freedom and the right of churches to select, train and appoint their own priests, clergy members and dignitaries. The government must stop its practice of listing the religious affiliation of citizens on their identity cards and personal documents so that no citizen be discriminated against and be able to freely practice his or her faith.

“Number two,” Father Ly writes: “The government must return all facilities and properties it has confiscated from the churches, even when the documentary evidence of ownership was lost in the war if local people can confirm the rightful ownership of these facilities.

“Number three: the government must abandon the rules and schemes it has used to oppress and destroy religions. Its interference in church affairs must cease. Committees created by the government but dressed as religious institutions that serve the government’s anti-religion policy must be disbanded.

“Number four: the government must unconditionally release all clergy members, priests, officials and dignitaries of the churches and lay people who are currently in prison or under administrative detention because of their faith.

“Number five: the government must fully respect every and each article of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of which the Vietnamese Communist Government became a signatory on September 24, 1962.”

Finally, Father Ly writes, “However, for as long as the Vietnamese Communists keep their dogmatic and totalitarian rule and disregard the fundamental freedoms of the people as I have presented above,” he goes on to say, “by trading with Vietnam the U.S. and other countries only strengthen the Communists’ grip on power.”

Again, I would like his full statement read by Members, because it is a very strong and compelling bit of testimony.

These are the words of Father Ly. He is now in prison 3 years of a 10-year prison term.

The resolution we are considering today, Mr. Speaker, has over 100 co-sponsors. I believe, will send a strong message to the leaders of Hanoi to free Father Ly and that the ongoing systematic abuses of human rights must cease and that they will not be tolerated.

H. Con. Res. 378 also condemns, and this amendment we are offering with the language today, the brutal crackdown against the Montagnard. Largely ignored by the American press, Vietnam crushed thousands of Montagnard in the Central Highlands on April 10 and 11. In classic dictatorship style and brutality, many Montagnard, who were protesting the confiscation of tribal lands and ongoing restrictions on religious activities, were beaten and there are reports that some were killed. This comes on the heels of another brutal crackdown against the Montagnard in December of 2001 that has resulted in the closing of over 400 churches.

I would just point out to my colleagues that there are also attempts to create organizations to renounce their faith and renunciation of faith. According to Ambassador John Hannah, our Ambassador at Large For Religious Freedom, there are approximately 100,000 Montagnards who were pressured to renounce their faith. I believe that most resisted, but 100,000 within the last few months and years have been pressured to say “no” to their faith in Christ.

H. Con. Res. 378 also urges the government of Vietnam to allow unfettered access to the Central Highlands, where all of this is going on, by foreign diplomats, the international press and non-governmental organizations and condemns the extent of the violence used against, as I said, the Montagnard protesters.

Mr. Speaker, finally, human rights have gotten worse, not better, since the Bilateral Trade Agreement with Vietnam of 2001. We must not remain silent while the government of Vietnam continues to persecute religious and ethnic dissidents and ethnic minorities. As a matter of fact, I believe strongly that Vietnam should be a country of Particular Concern of the CPC country, pursuant to the provisions of the International Religious Freedom Act.

We care deeply, Democrats and Republicans, Mr. Speaker. We care deeply about human rights, and I refer specifically to the words of Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly before the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

TESTIMONY OF REV. THADDEUS NGUYEN VAN LY

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honor to be perhaps the first Vietnamese Roman Catholic priest living under a communist regime to testify before your Commission at a location that represents the ideals of democracy. I would like to send my greetings of the New Millennium to you and to the people of the United States.

In the opening statement of the Declaral of Independence of Democratic Vietnam on September 2, 1945, Ho Chi Minh tried to win your nation’s support by solemnly quoting the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence of the United States: “All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

In less than 250 years since her independence, your country has become the shining example of freedom and independence—anyone who wants to know what freedom and independence are only needs to visit your country and hear people’s voices.

As an eyewitness living in Communist Vietnam for more than 25 years, I would like to address and frankly talk on these issues as your invitation letter has suggested.

1. THE REALITIES OF THE RELIGIONS IN VIET NAM IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

In order to achieve independence, liberty and happiness for the Vietnamese people, Ho Chi Minh chose Communism. This is a fundamental contradiction because Communism calls for a dictatorial regime that does not tolerate the concept of true liberty. Freedom of religion will be absent for as long as the Vietnamese government hangs on to its Communist ideology.

Since their victory of April 30, 1975, the Vietnamese Communists have extended its oppressive policy toward the different religions
to South Vietnam. Laws and decrees have been promulgated to confine, restrict, or ban religious activities. The government, believing all religions to be false, has pursued a campaign in which it has falsely accused clergy members and lay people as a pretext to detain and imprison those who protest its oppression. Government officials who lead a church choir, lead a seminary, or join a seminary. They are banished to concentration camps for years. This policy has been going on for nearly 50 years (from 1964 to 2001).

The government has used many ruses to divide and politicize the Catholic Church in two—the United Church of Vietnam (UCV) and the Buddhist Church of Vietnam. This has led to the formation of the Hoa Hao Buddhist Church of Representatives, which consists of mainly Communist cadres, to claim leadership over five million Hoa Hao Buddhists. The government has requisitioned for its arbitrary use numerous facilities and properties belonging to the different Churches.

With regard to the Catholic Church, the communists have severely restricted her fundamental rights. The many petitions issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Vietnam (CBCV) since 1980 have unmasked the Government's policy. This I have analyzed in my presentation released November 24, 1994 and the follow-up proclama-
dation dated November 24, 2000, which I have sent to your Commission. Following is a summary of the points made in these two statements.

1. The Vietnamese Communist Church has been publicly or indirectly in the Church in two—the United Church of Vietnam (UCV) and the Buddhist Church of Vietnam. This has led to the formation of the Hoa Hao Buddhist Church of Representatives, which consists of mainly Communist cadres, to claim leadership over five million Hoa Hao Buddhists. The government has requisitioned for its arbitrary use numerous facilities and properties belonging to the different Churches.

With regard to the Catholic Church, the communists have severely restricted her fundamental rights. The many petitions issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Vietnam (CBCV) since 1980 have unmasked the Government's policy. This I have analyzed in my presentation released November 24, 1994 and the follow-up proclama-
dation dated November 24, 2000, which I have sent to your Commission. Following is a summary of the points made in these two statements.

1. The Vietnamese Communist Church has been publicly or indirectly in the Church in two—the United Church of Vietnam (UCV) and the Buddhist Church of Vietnam. This has led to the formation of the Hoa Hao Buddhist Church of Representatives, which consists of mainly Communist cadres, to claim leadership over five million Hoa Hao Buddhists. The government has requisitioned for its arbitrary use numerous facilities and properties belonging to the different Churches.

With regard to the Catholic Church, the communists have severely restricted her fundamental rights. The many petitions issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Vietnam (CBCV) since 1980 have unmasked the Government's policy. This I have analyzed in my presentation released November 24, 1994 and the follow-up proclama-
dation dated November 24, 2000, which I have sent to your Commission. Following is a summary of the points made in these two statements.

1. The Vietnamese Communist Church has been publicly or indirectly in the Church in two—the United Church of Vietnam (UCV) and the Buddhist Church of Vietnam. This has led to the formation of the Hoa Hao Buddhist Church of Representatives, which consists of mainly Communist cadres, to claim leadership over five million Hoa Hao Buddhists. The government has requisitioned for its arbitrary use numerous facilities and properties belonging to the different Churches.
the Vietnamese Communists’ promise of
good faith. The United States and many 
other countries have had bitter experiences
dealing with their broken promises in the 
past.

The Vietnamese Communists have signed 
many accords and agreements 
on human rights but have never intended to 
respect them. Their intention is to deceive 
the community. For example, Vietnam 
became signatory to the Inter-
national Covenant on Civil and Political 
Rights in 1980 but does not abide by Articles 
18 and 19 of this covenant which call for 
the respect for the freedoms of thought, speech, 
and religion. If international human rights 
institutions allow themselves to fall victim 
to such deception, they will contribute to 
the following dire consequences: (1) the Viet-
namese Government will exploit their 
sign-
ing the document to falsely claim that 
are human rights in Vietnam; (2) these inter-
national institutions will lose their credi-
ability as they prove to be so easily deceived; 
and third, these people will be taught that they 
pro-long the Communist oppression of the Viet-
namese people—this in fact constitutes a 
major crime against my people.

Therefore, if the United States and other 
countries truly sympathize with my ill-fated 
people and truly care about human rights, 
especially the rights to religious freedom, of 
the Vietnamese people, you must not help 
the Communist Government prolong its to-
tally. The United States and other countries 
and other countries should suspend all agree-
ments harmful to the Vietnamese people and 
do everything in your capacity to put pres-
sure on the Government of Vietnam to 
front freedom and democracy to dawn on our 
coun-

III. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP IMPROVE FREEDOMS IN VIETNAM IN THE NEAR TERM, AND IN THE LONG TERM?

The Vietnamese Communists have idolized 
Ho Chi Minh, turning him into a “god” and 
create a new religion revolving around 
him. The Communist Government wants to 
suppress all other religions and replace them 
with this new religion in order to unify the 
people behind it. In fact, Ho Chi Minh had made significant contributions 
to our national struggle for independence at 
the same time he had committed serious crimes against the Vietnamese people. One 
basic endeavor that the international com-
nunity needs to undertake is to unravel the 
harassment by the Communists around this historical figure.

In the short term, the United States and other 
countries help the Church in Vietnam 
achieve greater independence from the 
government, should show by example 
how freedom of religion is respected in the 
free world, and should expose the oppression 
that the Vietnamese Government has 
impacted on the Churches. At first, the 
Vietnamese Communists may see that such 
independence would clash with its totalitarian 
power but with time it may realize that the 
control and interfere with Church 
affairs, such as the appointment of priests, 
should have never been theirs to start with.

The Vietnamese people will not enjoy reli-
gious freedom as long as the Communist 
regime remains in place. Therefore if the 
United States and other countries truly 
 desire religious freedom for the Vietnamese people, they will need to cre-
ate favorable conditions for the early demise of the Communist regime.

Legislation

This is a precious opportunity to speak on 
behalf of my people, of the different Church-
es, of the Church in Asia. I pray 
I would like to extend my gratitude to you, 
to the U.S. Congress, and the American peo-
ple, including some two million Vietnamese-
Americans, for having given me such an op-
portunity.

May God bless you, your families, your col-
leagues, the American people, and your beau-
tiful country. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of 
my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 
myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support 
of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to commend 
good friend, the gentleman from 
New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), for his leadership 
on Vietnam human rights issues and, 
indeed, on being the most indefatig-
able and passionate advocate of human rights in this body.

As the political security and eco-
nomic relationship between the United 
States and Vietnam become increas-
ingly complex, we must never forget 
the continued absence of internationally 

Mr. Speaker, Father Ly, the subject of 
this resolution, is a Vietnamese 
Catholic priest. Three years ago, he 
was invited by the International Re-
ligious Freedom Commission to give tes-
timony related to religious freedom in 
Vietnam. Since the Vietnamese Gov-
ernment denied Father Ly permission 
to leave his country, he submitted 
written testimony for the record. In 
this testimony, Father Ly outlined 
the lack of religious freedom in Vietnam 
and urged Vietnamese citizens 
continue to struggle, non-
violently, for their rights.

He was subsequently sentenced to 15 
years in prison after a 1-day closed 
trial in which he was denied adequate 
legal counsel. Father Ly was convicted 
of slandering the Communist Party and 
distorting the religious policy of the 
government of Vietnam.

Subsequently, Mr. Speaker, the 
United Nations Human Rights Group stated that 
Father Ly was arrested and de-
tained only for his opinions, and the 
deprivation of the liberty of Father Ly 
is arbitrary and contravenes the Uni-
versal Declaration of Human Rights 
and the International Covenant on 
Civil and Political Rights.

Mr. Speaker, as we meet here today, 
Father Ly continues to remain in pris-
on because he had the courage of his convictions and he refused to white-
wash the continued lack of religious freedom in Vietnam. Our resolution 
urges his immediate release from pris-
on, a call that has overruled.

It is my strong hope that the Viet-
namese Government will receive this 
ally call through the passage of 
our resolution. While large numbers 
of Vietnamese Catholics continue to at-
tend services each Sunday, the Viet-
namese Government prohibits the church from training enough priests to meet the growing demand for clerics.

The Vietnamese Government has already refused to compensate the church fully 
for expropriated church property, and it prohibits the church from expanding 
its activities to help the poor in Viet-
nam.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my col-
leagues to show their concern about 
the continued unjust imprisonment of 
Father Ly and the lack of religious freedom in Vietnam by supporting 
strongly our resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of 
my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. 
Speaker, I yield such time as he may 
consume to the distinguished gen-
tleman from California (Mr. COX), the 
chairman of the Select Committee on 
Homeland Security.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I thank 
the chairman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, we are here on the floor 
to demand of the communist govern-
ment of Vietnam that Father Ly im-
mediately be released, unconditionally.
Father Ly’s only offense is that he is a 
Catholic priest who sought to minister 
to the spiritual needs of his country-
mates and countrywomen in Vietnam.

For this offense, he has been in prison 
for the last 3 years, and the communist 
government of Vietnam expects that he 
will serve the full decade of his sen-
tence.

This is, of course, an affront to 
human rights. It is also an affront to 
the United States, because it was the 
U.S. Commission on International Re-
ligious Freedom that solicited Father 
Ly’s testimony. They asked that Fa-
ther Ly testify in person. He was will-
ing to do so; but, of course, the 
communist government of Vietnam 
forbade him from doing so. So Father Ly 
themselves written testimony, and it is 
the burden of that written testimony 
that he was convicted. That is why he 
is now in jail.

Never has there been a clearer path 
from freedom to imprisonment than in 
this case. We can read the entirety of 
his offense. What he said, in response 
to questions from the United States, is 
that there is not religious freedom in 
Vietnam. He said that the government 
of Vietnam had strangled that of 
their independence and freedom. For 
speaking this truth, Father Ly is now 
expected to spend a decade in a 
community prison.

It was 1 month after he wrote this 
testimony and sent it to the United 
States that he was arrested. Indeed, he 
was arrested while he was saying mass. 
He was on the alter before a congrega-
tion. Six hundred policemen of the 
Vietnamese communist government sur-
rounded the church, stormed it, and 
dragged him off. Of course, the Viet-
namese Government provided him no 
legal representation, no consultation 
whatsoever; and not surprisingly, on 
October 19 of that same year, Father 
Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly was sen-
tenced to this seemingly indefinite 
time in prison, 15 years originally. He 
had already spent 3 years. Now he is 
going to get a 10-year sentence.

Father Ly is no stranger to repres-
sion at the hands of the Vietnamese

May 11, 2004
dictatorship. Since 1977, the government has repeatedly harassed him, repeatedly arrested him, and repeatedly jailed him for his advocacy of religious freedom.

So the Congress today calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Father Ly. But we also recognize that he is just one of the resistance leaders who represent the struggle of all of those citizens of Vietnam who are fighting for freedom and for democracy.

Another piece of legislation to address that struggle is the Vietnam Human Rights Act, H.R. 1587, which I hope the House will soon consider. This legislation will continue to provide nonhumanitarian assistance to the government of Vietnam, it will support the efforts of human rights and democracy advocates there, and it will help us work to overcome the government's jamming of Radio Free Asia and their Vietnamese broadcast. It will help resettle the refugees and returnees, and an annual report from the Department of State regarding progress toward freedom and democracy in Vietnam, and the lack of it.

The situation that is before us today, of which I am an official cosponsor, is, therefore, a call to action. It is a call, of course, upon the Vietnamese Government to act, but it is also our call to action. The Vietnamese Government and other dictatorial regimes around the globe must come to realize that oppression does not go unnoticed, that the Congress and the President will continue to fight for those like Father Ly who seek meaningful change in their country.

Mr. Speaker, I am very, very proud to join the gentleman from New Jersey (Chairman Smith) and the gentleman from California (Mr. Lantos) in supporting this resolution, and I am very proud of the stands for human rights that this Congress will soon take.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to spend 2 minutes to my good friend and distinguished colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ), a champion of human rights.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 378, a resolution which calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Coadjutor Father and human rights champion Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly. I thank my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Smith), for bringing this resolution to the floor. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the bill, and I am proud to work with him on the bipartisan Vietnam Caucus.

On this day, the 10th anniversary of Vietnam Human Rights Day and the 14th anniversary of the Vietnamese Manifesto of Nonviolent Movement for Human Rights, there can be nothing more appropriate for this Congress to do than to pass this resolution. Why Father Ly. Why should that be? Well, as Members of the United States Congress have a special responsibility, for, you see, it was testimony to this Congress, to this Nation, that Father Ly gave us that put him behind bars.

1945

In fact, we brought forward that testimony in a human rights caucus hearing on religious prisoners in Vietnam, or, should I say, the lack of religious freedom in Vietnam. So we have a particular responsibility to let the world know and to put pressure on the Vietnamese Government with respect to Father Ly's case.

In reaction to Father Ly's defense of human rights and his pronouncements on the need for religious freedom and nonviolent resistance, the Government of Vietnam branded him a traitor, a traitor, and prohibited him from carrying out his religious duties as a priest and sentenced him to 10 years of prison for "damaging the government's unit policy."

The imprisonment of Father Ly is not only a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it is a direct attack on each and every one of us who value human rights.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey, and I thank the gentleman from California for being such a strong supporter of human rights in the world, and I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume for the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN), and I thank him for his support on human rights in general and human rights in Vietnam in particular.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to join my colleagues today and to add my support for House Concurrent Resolution 378 calling for the immediate and unconditional release of father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly.

Father Ly has peacefully campaigned for more than 30 years for religious freedom in his country, and he has called on me to request that the nation of Vietnam allow churches to appoint their own leaders and to stop listing people's religious affiliation on their I.D. cards, and to return property that was confiscated from the churches to those particular denominations and faiths.

Now, recently, Father Ly, as we have heard, has been sentenced to 15 years of solitary confinement, a very serious sentence, for merely advocating people having the right for free religious expression. That sentence has been mitigated by 5 years, still a 10-year sentence. In the brief time that he had to speak to his own family, he made the following statement: "My duty and my conscience required me to fight for the freedom of our church. If I had realized to those terrifying situations for our church and had not done anything, I would have been guilty before God. Now I think I have accomplished my duty. I do not feel sorry for myself."

Father Ly, though he lives on the other side of the world, is in a sense a brother of each of ours. This is a personal affront that the Government of Vietnam has stood against those people who have the courage to allow people to express their own personal convictions.

It is particularly appropriate in this Chamber and at this time for us to recall the words of Madison on the subject of property. When property was endowed by our founders, they did not think so much of a piece of land or even of possession, but they thought of the property first and foremost and closest to the heart of all true lovers of freedom: it was the property of our own convictions, the property of our own soul, the property to be able to express our opinion and our devotion to whichever God it is that we would worship. And it is this fundamental, fundamental, heartfelt core of American belief which binds us to freedom-fighters all over the world and which calls us to strong condemnation of the Government of Vietnam, that they would trample people's right to worship and freedom under their feet with total disregard, and would lock a champion of freedom like this away for 10 years, away from his family, and harassing his family.

So I strongly add my support to the gentleman and his resolution, H. Con. Res. 378.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, we have no additional requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 378, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 378, the concurrent resolution just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.
ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

☐ 1800

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

---

Making in order at any time consideration of H. Con. Res. 414, expressing sense of Congress that all Americans observe the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education with a commitment to continuing and building on the legacy of Brown

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it shall be in order at any time without intervention of any point of order to consider House Concurrent Resolution 414.

The concurrent resolution shall be considered as read for amendment; and the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the concurrent resolution to final adoption without intervening motion or demand for a division of the question excepted: (1) 30 minutes of debate on the concurrent resolution equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary; and (2) one motion to reconsider.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin? There was no objection.

---

Calling on the government of socialist republic of Vietnam to release father Thadeus Nguyen Van Ly

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Sweeney). The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 378, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FATTAL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 378, as amended, on which the yea and nay votes are ordered.

Without objection, the remaining two votes in this series will be 5-minute votes.

There was no objection.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yea 242, nays 1, not voting 8, as follows:

[Vote Roll No. 187] YEA—424


Not voting—7

DeMint Lowey Reyes Lantos Scott (GA)

---


---


---

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 469. The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 469, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 422, nays 0, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 168]

[The roll call on roll No. 168 is not shown in the document.]

NAYS—1

Paul

NOT VOTING—8

Abercrombie

Lantos

Scott (GA)

Bailey

Lowey

Tauschin

Baird

Hyde

Raynes

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1809

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

[The remainder of the document is not shown in the image.]