



H.Con.Res. 374 – Supporting the spirit of peace and desire for unity displayed in the letter from 138 leading Muslim scholars, and in the Pope's response

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Con.Res. 374 is being considered on the House floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Zach Wamp (R-TN) on June 19, 2008. The House Foreign Affairs Committee ordered the legislation to be reported by unanimous consent on July, 24, 2008.

H.Con.Res. 374 is expected to be considered on the House floor on September 23, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Con.Res. 374 expresses a sense of Congress that:

- The United States supports the spirit of peace and desire for unity displayed in the letter from 138 leading Muslim scholars from every sect of Islam to the Pope and to other Christian leaders, as well as the Pope's response to the letter;
- The United States supports the summit of Catholic and Muslim religious leaders and their mutual goal of greater dialogue between the religions;
- The United States should encourage those Muslims throughout the world who stand for peace and reconciliation; and
- The United States appreciates those voices within all faiths who have condemned genocide, terrorism, death, and destruction and who call for global peace between the "Abrahamic religions".

BACKGROUND

In October 2007, a letter was sent to Pope Benedict XVI from 138 signees, all of which were key members in the Muslim community around the world. The letter focused on the idea of resolving differences and finding a way that both Islam and Catholicism may exist together. The most notable phrase in the letter was, "The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians." This was viewed by many around the world as a ground breaking declaration that the two religions can interact and coexist. The letter helps to clarify the difference between radical Muslims and those that view the text of the Quran as merely a religious text and use it for guidance in their lives.

The letter spurred Pope Benedict XVI to address a Catholic-Muslim summit of religious leaders in November 2008. The eventual goal of this summit is to begin an official and regular dialogue between leaders in both religions.

STAFF CONTACT

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