I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding me this

time.

I also want to thank all of the previous speakers: the gentleman from

Michigan, the original author of the resolution; the gentleman from New

York; and especially the gentleman from Virginia, Congressman Wolf, who

has been such a leader on these issues for many years now.

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 944, expressing the sense of the

House of Representatives on religious minorities in Iraq.

While this bill calls attention to various religious minorities in

Iraq that are victims of acts of violence and religious persecution,

one group that is extremely vulnerable, especially vulnerable, is the

Iraqi Christians. In the most recent series of attacks in Iraq's

northern city of Mosul, five Iraqi Christians were attacked and killed

just last week in various acts of violence. According to a February 17,

2010, article from Reuters, ``Bombings and shootings are recorded

almost daily in the violent northern city of Mosul, where the situation

has been described by one Christian priest as `miserable.' Iraqi

Christians are forced to hide in their homes in fear of being the next

victim of what is being called a `systematic campaign of violence

against minorities.' And Sunni Islamist insurgent groups have labeled

Christians and other Iraqi minorities as devil worshipers and

infidels.''

There is growing concern, Madam Speaker, of even more violence and

killings in the wake of the upcoming elections in March. These attacks

are being used as a means of intimidation to discourage Iraqi

Christians from voting in the upcoming elections. There have also been

threats of violence using military means to prevent the elections from

happening at all.

I first spoke out about the violence against Christians in Iraq that

last year when one of my constituents and a native of Iraq, Susan

Dakak, brought to my attention the escalation of violence against this

particular religious group. I also met recently, a few weeks ago, with

a member of the Iraqi Parliament, Yonadom Kanna, recently to discuss

the ongoing persecution of Iraqi Christians.

The horrendous human rights violations and acts against religious

minorities must end. The United States should do as much as possible to

help stop the discrimination against and persecution of the Christian

community in Iraq, and this resolution will be a meaningful step in

that direction.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.