



FAITH & FREEDOM COALITION

January 24, 2018

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Faith & Freedom Coalition, I write to strongly support the nomination of Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback for the position of Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom at the State Department. The Ambassador works with countries to repeal, and stop the implementation of laws which impede religious freedom, as well as working to free people imprisoned and persecuted on account of religious beliefs. Further delay of Gov. Brownback's confirmation not only risks lives, but delegitimizes American foreign policy abroad.

According to the Pew Research Center, nearly 70 percent of the world's people live in countries with high restrictions on religion, the brunt of which often falls on religious minorities. The Islamic State has carried out a genocide against religious minorities including Yazidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims in the Middle East. North Korea suppresses all religion. China has systematically oppressed Muslim Uyghurs, Tibetan Buddhists, and Christians. Conversion from Islam and public practice of minority religions is still against the law in a number of countries including Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. The suppression of religious expression in Europe is on the rise as well, as countries pass bills blocking public expressions of faith such as burqas and large crosses. Finally, in Myanmar, we see a government actively carrying out a genocide against its Muslim population.

The U.S. Constitution recognizes religious freedom as the first freedom because it recognizes that there are things higher than government, and in so doing limits the power of the state. This is why authoritarian leaders throughout the world and throughout history have attempted to suppress the practice of religion.

The importance of religion in world affairs cannot be overstated. The State Department is hindered by not having the Ambassadorship filled and working on these issues full time. America's roots lay in fleeing religious oppression and Americans remain committed to combatting those who seek to oppress. With the state of religious freedom in the world today, it is critical to quickly confirm Gov. Brownback and to give the Office of International Religious Freedom the tools it needs to protect this most foundational of freedoms for people everywhere.

Faith & Freedom Coalition is a grassroots public policy organization with over 1.7 million members and supporters committed to pro-life and pro-family legislation, criminal justice reform, immigration reform, and education reform at the federal and state level. In 2016, FFC volunteers knocked on 1.2 million doors of social conservative voters in key states, made over 10 million phone calls, sent 22 million pieces of educational mail, and passed out 30 million voter guides in 117,000 churches.

Thank you for considering the views of our members and supporters, for whom protecting religious liberty is one of their top concerns.

Sincerely,



Timothy R. Head
Executive Director
Faith & Freedom Coalition