

Interim congressional scorecard on international religious freedom issued

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WASHINGTON—A Florida Republican and a New York Democrat earned top scores on the interim International Religious Freedom Congressional Scorecard, an educational project of the [21st Century Wilberforce Initiative](#).

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and Rep. Eliot Engle, D-N.Y., received top marks on the interim scorecard, based on their public engagement with international religious freedom issues.

Bipartisan support for international religious freedom

Forty-eight lawmakers—28 Democrats and 20 Republicans—earned recognition as “notable leaders” on international religious freedom during the first year the 115th Congress.

Texasans who received the recognition included one Republican senator, one Republican representative and one Democratic representative—Sen. Ted Cruz, Rep. Ted Poe and Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee.

The scorecard tracked nine bills and 12 resolutions in the Senate. It identified Cruz as primary sponsor of two resolutions, co-sponsor of three other resolutions and original co-sponsor of one bill regarding human rights in North Korea.

The scorecard tracked 11 bills and 17 resolutions in the House of Representatives, along with involvement in key leadership groups related to global religious freedom and human rights.

Poe was recognized as primary sponsor of one bill, original co-sponsor of one bill and co-sponsor of three bills and one resolution. The scorecard noted his votes in favor of three bills and two concurrent resolutions, as well as his membership in the International Religious Freedom Caucus and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Caucus, which focuses on the repression of religious minorities worldwide.

‘Restoration of human dignity’

“The goal of the interim scorecard is two-fold—to recognize and thank members of Congress who have championed international religious freedom in tangible ways and to encourage legislators to take even bolder actions in support of this cause and the restoration of human dignity around the world,” said Randel Everett, president of the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative and former executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

“As we mark the 20th anniversary of the International Religious Freedom Act, it is fitting that this year’s interim scorecard demonstrates a renewed commitment among many congressional leaders to place religious freedom at the center of U.S. foreign policy. We are thankful for the promise of these efforts yet mindful of the work that remains.”