

Rep. Kesto offered the following resolution:

**House Resolution No. 402.**

A resolution to urge the President and Congress of the United States to encourage international intervention on behalf of the Iraqi civilians in dire need of protection from religious persecution.

Whereas, Sunni Islamist insurgents and the terrorist group known as the Islamic State or IS (also known as ISIS or ISIL) have expanded control over areas in northwest and central Iraq. IS has a stated mission of establishing an Islamic state and is moving forward through extremist attacks on Christians, Shiites, and other unprotected minorities in certain parts of the region. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people in the Nineveh Plain face ethnic and religious cleansing, persecution, and harassment due to attacks by the terrorists; and

Whereas, Over two-thirds of the Christian population in Iraq is made up of Chaldeans and Assyrians, with smaller populations of Syriacs and Armenians. More than 500,000 people have been displaced by the current violence in Iraq, with nearly 80% of Iraq's 1.5 million Christian population having fled since 2003. These communities in Northwestern Iraq have recently been given an ultimatum to convert, flee, or be killed. Mosul's 1800-year-old Christian community no longer exists. Many of these individuals have resettled in the United States, including Michigan. Over 130,000 Chaldeans currently reside in our state, the largest population outside of Iraq. This community has, and continues to be, a strong asset to our state, among other states in our union; and

Whereas, The United States has provided over \$73 million in humanitarian assistance to Iraq's minority populations since 2003. Yet, the crisis currently gripping northwestern Iraq has serious potential to undo all international efforts to restore stability to Iraq. Action by the United States is necessary to reaffirm our commitment to protecting minority groups facing persecution; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the President and Congress of the United States to encourage international intervention on behalf of the Iraqi civilians in dire need of protection from religious persecution; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.