

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 208 Session of
2026

INTRODUCED BY MASTRIANO, MARTIN, ARGALL, VOGEL, PHILLIPS-HILL,
HUTCHINSON, LAUGHLIN, DUSH, BROOKS, GEBHARD AND CULVER,
JANUARY 20, 2026

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, JANUARY 20, 2026

A RESOLUTION

1 Condemning the worldwide persecution of Christians, recognizing
2 the persecution as a grave human rights crisis, reaffirming
3 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's historic commitment to
4 religious liberty and urging Federal action.

5 WHEREAS, Religious liberty is a foundational principle of the
6 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States, enshrined in
7 the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and
8 rooted in the vision of William Penn, who believed that freedom
9 of conscience is essential to human dignity; and

10 WHEREAS, William Penn wrote that "True godliness doesn't turn
11 men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and
12 excites their endeavors to mend it," a principle that has guided
13 Pennsylvania's enduring commitment to freedom of faith and
14 peaceful coexistence; and

15 WHEREAS, According to Open Doors International, today,
16 Christians are the most persecuted religious group in the world,
17 with more than 380 million Christians living under conditions of
18 high or extreme persecution because of their faith; and

1 WHEREAS, This persecution is not limited to social
2 discrimination or isolated unrest, and constitutes a global
3 human rights catastrophe that in many nations reflects
4 systematic, coordinated and deliberate campaigns to silence
5 Christian belief, suppress worship and eradicate Christian
6 communities; and

7 WHEREAS, According to Open Doors International's 2025 World
8 Watch List, Christians worldwide face imprisonment, torture,
9 forced conversion, mob violence, destruction of homes and
10 churches, sexual violence, abduction and murder solely because
11 of their faith; and

12 WHEREAS, Open Doors International is a watchdog organization
13 to end the persecution of Christians worldwide by bringing the
14 atrocities committed against Christians to global awareness; and

15 WHEREAS, In Pakistan, blasphemy laws are routinely abused as
16 instruments of terror; and

17 WHEREAS, A single accusation, which are often false and
18 motivated by personal, political or economic animus, can result
19 in mob violence, extrajudicial killings and the destruction of
20 entire Christian communities; and

21 WHEREAS, Open Doors International has reported on Christians
22 in Pakistan who have been publicly lynched, their homes burned
23 and their neighborhoods razed, including the destruction of
24 Christian communities in Joseph Colony in Lahore and Gojra City,
25 while authorities failed to intervene or hold perpetrators
26 accountable; and

27 WHEREAS, In April 2018, during Easter celebrations in Quetta,
28 Pakistan, gunmen murdered Imran Masih, Tariq Masih, Pervaiz
29 Masih and Firdus Bibi, and injured a minor child, Sehar Pervaiz,
30 followed the next day by a separate attack outside a church in

1 Essa Nagri, killing Rashid Khalid and Azhar Iqbal and wounding
2 others; and

3 WHEREAS, In 2023, mobs in Jaranwala, Pakistan, burned more
4 than 20 churches and hundreds of Christian homes, desecrated
5 crosses, trampled Bibles and forced families to flee in terror
6 with little more than the clothes they were wearing; and

7 WHEREAS, These actions illustrate the persistent and lethal
8 targeting of Christians in Pakistan; and

9 WHEREAS, Young Christian girls in Pakistan are routinely
10 kidnapped, raped, forcibly married and coerced to convert to
11 another religion, with these crimes frequently ignored or
12 legitimized by courts and families who seek justice subjected to
13 threats, violence or death; and

14 WHEREAS, Open Doors International also publicized that in the
15 People's Republic of China, the Chinese Communist Party has
16 waged an open campaign against Christianity, demolishing
17 churches, removing crosses, imprisoning pastors, banning
18 children from worship, censoring Bible access and shutting down
19 underground "house church" networks; and

20 WHEREAS, Christians in China have been ordered to replace
21 images of Christ with portraits of Communist Party leaders,
22 while pastors who refuse face detention, disappearance and long-
23 term imprisonment; and

24 WHEREAS, The Chinese government has deployed artificial
25 intelligence surveillance systems to monitor church attendance
26 and religious activity, creating an unprecedented digital
27 apparatus of religious persecution that tracks, grades and
28 punishes faith itself; and

29 WHEREAS, In Haiti, the collapse of civil order has enabled
30 heavily armed gangs to target Christian institutions that

1 provide education, medical care and humanitarian relief,
2 resulting in churches being burned, looted and occupied; and
3 WHEREAS, Priests, nuns, pastors and Christian aid workers in
4 Haiti have been kidnapped at gunpoint, held for ransom,
5 assaulted or killed, often during worship services or funerals;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Open Doors International reported that, in 2023, a
8 gang attack on a Christian orphanage in Port-au-Prince resulted
9 in the abduction of children and staff, the burning of vehicles
10 and threats of execution, demonstrating the deliberate targeting
11 of Christian ministries serving the poor; and

12 WHEREAS, Despite this terror, the Church in Haiti continues
13 to feed the hungry, care for the sick and shelter the displaced,
14 bearing witness to faith, resilience and service in the face of
15 violence; and

16 WHEREAS, The most severe persecution of Christians today,
17 according to Open Doors International, is occurring in Nigeria,
18 Africa's most populous nation and home to one of the world's
19 largest Christian populations; and

20 WHEREAS, Over the past decade, tens of thousands of
21 Christians in Nigeria have been murdered by Boko Haram
22 terrorists and Fulani extremist militias, with churches bombed
23 during worship, villages destroyed, clergy executed and entire
24 Christian communities wiped out; and

25 WHEREAS, In 2023 alone, more than 5,000 Christians were
26 killed for their faith in Nigeria, while women and children were
27 abducted, forcibly converted or murdered for refusing to
28 renounce Christianity; and

29 WHEREAS, The atrocities in Nigeria account for more
30 abductions, forcible conversions and murders than in all other

1 countries combined; and

2 WHEREAS, In Nigeria's Plateau and Benue States, mass graves
3 mark villages annihilated in single-night attacks, and the
4 failure of governmental authorities to provide protection or
5 accountability has allowed religious cleansing to continue with
6 impunity; and

7 WHEREAS, If left unchecked, the persecution of Christians in
8 Nigeria risks becoming the largest genocide of Christians in the
9 21st century; and

10 WHEREAS, Christians in India comprise approximately 2.3% of
11 the population, yet face rising intolerance, extreme violence
12 and legal harassment, particularly in Manipur, Uttar Pradesh,
13 Chhattisgarh and Odisha, according to Open Doors International;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Reported attacks against Christians surged from 147
16 incidents in 2014 to more than 831 in 2024, with nearly 300
17 occurring in the first months of 2024 and more than 1,000
18 Christians arrested under anti-conversion laws; and

19 WHEREAS, Organizations, including the United Christian Forum,
20 the Federation of Indian American Christian Organizations and
21 Ecclesia United International report that more than 117,000
22 Christians have suffered violence, displacement, intimidation or
23 legal persecution, including forced re conversions, mob attacks,
24 vandalism of churches and schools and threats to pastors and
25 worshipers; and

26 WHEREAS, Article 25 of the Constitution of India guarantees
27 freedom of religion, yet Christians often live in fear, unable
28 to openly practice their faith; and

29 WHEREAS, Behind every statistic is a human life, a mother
30 shielding her children from a mob, a pastor preaching

1 forgiveness as the pastor's church burns or a child fleeing
2 violence clutching a Bible; and

3 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has a moral and
4 historic obligation to speak against religious persecution, to
5 affirm the equal dignity of all people and to stand with those
6 who suffer for their faith; therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 condemn the worldwide persecution of Christians, recognizing the
9 persecution as a grave human rights crisis, reaffirm the
10 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's historic commitment to religious
11 liberty and urge Federal action; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of
13 Pennsylvania, in the strongest and most unequivocal terms,
14 condemn the worldwide persecution of Christians as a grave human
15 rights crisis and, in many cases, as genocide under
16 international law; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
18 call upon the President of the United States, the United States
19 Secretary of State and the Congress of the United States to:

20 (1) Formally recognize the persecution of Christians
21 worldwide as a grave human rights crisis and, where
22 applicable, genocide under international law.

23 (2) Fulfill the obligations of the United States under
24 the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime
25 of Genocide.

26 (3) Impose appropriate diplomatic, economic and targeted
27 sanctions against governments and organizations that enable
28 or perpetrate religious persecution.

29 (4) Provide humanitarian aid and security assistance to
30 displaced and endangered Christian populations.

(5) Lead international efforts to hold perpetrators of religious violence accountable;

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania affirm its enduring commitment to religious liberty as the foundation of human dignity and declare that Pennsylvania's laws stand firmly on the side of freedom, faith and human rights for all; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
10 the presiding officers of each house of Congress and to each
11 member of Congress from Pennsylvania.