

104TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 187

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress with respect to
recent church burnings.

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Whereas more than 30 African-American churches have been burned over the last 18 months;

Whereas arrests have been made in only 5 of the cases currently under investigation;

Whereas the African-American community deserves the full support of Congress in solving these cases in an expedi-

tious manner and it is important for Congress to speak out against the recent incidents of arson; and

Whereas several measures which would expedite the investigation into these incidents and assist in the prosecution of individuals found guilty of involvement in these incidents are now pending before Congress: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) attacks on places of worship because of the
4 race, color, denomination, or ethnicity of the con-
5 gregation undermine fundamental American ideals;

6 (2) these fires appear to be hate crimes and
7 also implicitly interfere with the First Amendment
8 rights and other civil rights of the victims;

9 (3) the arson of a place of worship is repulsive
10 to us as a society;

11 (4) the Congress condemns, in the strongest
12 possible terms, these abhorrent actions against freely
13 worshipping American citizens and the African-
14 American community in particular;

15 (5) the Congress sends its sincere condolences
16 to those individuals who have been affected by these
17 acts of cowardice;

18 (6) the Congress fully supports the activities of
19 local law enforcement officials, the Department of

1 Justice, and the Department of the Treasury in in-
2 vestigating these incidents;

3 (7) the Congress urges the United States Attor-
4 ney General and local prosecutors to seek the maxi-
5 mum penalty available under law to punish the per-
6 petrators of these craven acts;

7 (8) it is important that Congress enact appro-
8 priate legislation to ensure that Federal law enforce-
9 ment has the necessary tools to punish and deter
10 these shameful, vile acts, including the bipartisan
11 legislation introduced by Representatives Hyde and
12 Conyers which would facilitate the prosecution of
13 persons responsible for these acts;

14 (9) the President is urged to make the fullest
15 possible use of all available law enforcement re-
16 sources to bring the culprits in these crimes to jus-
17 tice;

18 (10) Congress encourages the people of the
19 United States to work within their own communities
20 to prevent arson against African-American or any
21 other house of worship; and

22 (11) Congress encourages American citizens to
23 observe a national week of prayer beginning June
24 16, 1996, and ending June 23, 1996, in their
25 churches, synagogues, mosques, and other places of

1 worship for racial harmony, religious tolerance and
2 respect for the civil and human rights of all Ameri-
3 cans.

Passed the House of Representatives June 13, 1996.

Attest:

Clerk.