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News from Representative Randy Hultgren



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[President Agrees with House ACA Fix for Businesses](#)

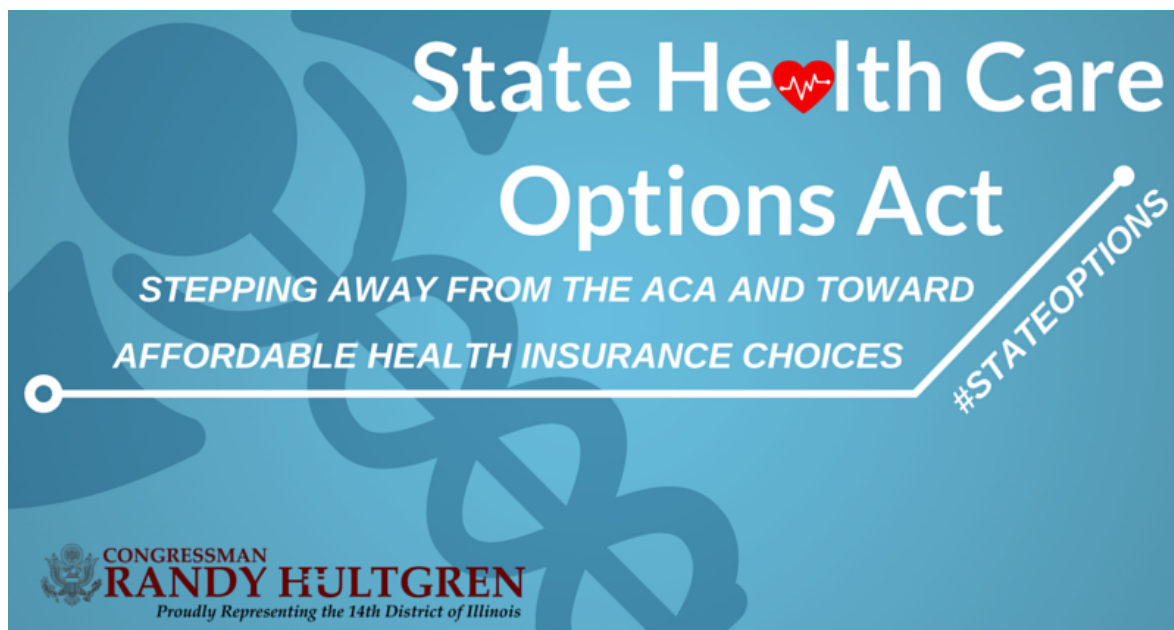
This month, President Obama signed into law the House-passed bill **H.R. 1624, the Protecting Affordable Coverage for Employees Act (PACE Act)**, which I cosponsored. The measure is an important, bipartisan fix to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that maintains flexibility for states and mid-market employers that the ACA sought to take away by changing the long-standing definition of the small group insurance market.

I believe until the law is repealed and replaced with a real alternative, we cannot let its more harmful provisions continue to hurt consumers. Contrary to media reports, [the administration has agreed with the House on at least 10 occasions that the ACA is not set in stone, doesn't deliver on its promises and needs to be changed](#). The PACE Act is the latest in ACA fixes the House has proposed that this administration has acted on.

We need to continue to give states the flexibility to do what's best for the people who live there and offer employers more certainty and better tools to most effectively run their businesses.

That's why I introduced **H.R. 3352, the State Health Care Options Act of 2015**, an ACA waiver bill that empowers states like Illinois to build their own alternatives. It offers Americans a parachute off an overregulated health insurance market characterized by rising premiums and limited plan

options.



[Read more about my bill here.](#)

Helsinki Commission to Examine Europe's Refugee Crisis

The refugee crisis in Europe is at the top of international news headlines. Next week at the Helsinki Commission ([Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe](#)) we will be examining the issue and hearing from key witnesses in a hearing entitled: "Europe's Refugee Crisis: How Should the US, EU, and OSCE Respond?" [Click here for more information and a link to the live webcast.](#)

As I prepare questions, [feel free to let me know what you think should be brought up.](#)

In addition, we will be holding a hearing on Russia's human rights abuses later in the week. [Click here for more information.](#)

Reauthorizing Religious Freedom Watchdog

Attacks on religious minorities around the world have been increasing with disturbing rapidity.

Christians made up 20 percent of the Middle East population at the start of the 20th century. Given a sustained attack in recent years on Christian belief and practice, that number is now around 5 percent and declining.

Yazidis in Iraq and Syria have been systematically targeted by ISIS for slavery and execution. Just this month, news reports have revealed Yazidi women have taken their own lives out of despair after repeated rapes and assaults.

One of the best ways to fight these attacks on religious freedom is meticulous chronicling of such abuses and then proclaiming them loud and clear to a watching world. The importance of the [United States Commission on International Religious Freedom's \(USCIRF\)](#) mission of monitoring, recording and publishing attacks on religious belief—or any belief at all—cannot be overestimated.

Created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act, USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission.

USCIRF has documented ethnic cleansing of Muslims and sectarian violence in the Central African Republic, and urged the State Department designate it as a Country of Particular Concern.

In Russia, “serious violations of freedom of religion or belief continue.”

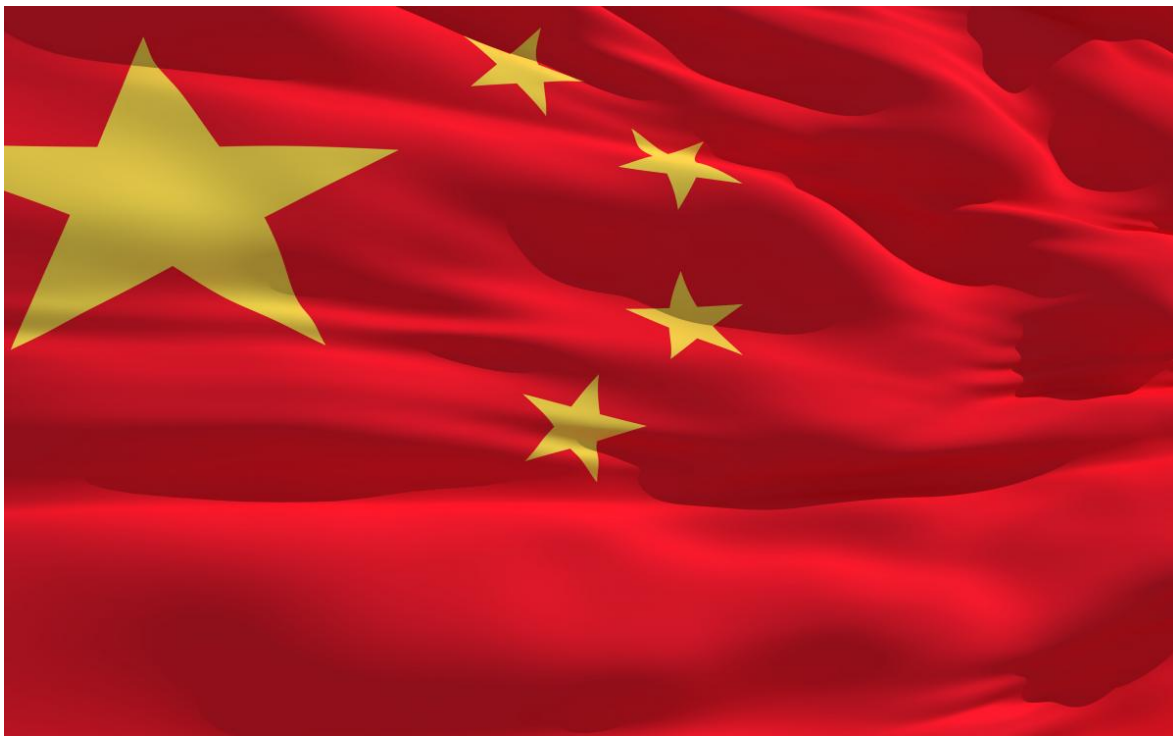
China has taken further steps to “consolidate” its “authoritarian monopoly” over the lives of its citizens (see the China Commission report below). This has led to “unprecedented violence” against Uigher Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants, and Falun Gong practitioners.

And the list goes on and on.

[Their annual report is an invaluable reference](#) for my colleagues and me and our staffs, and assists my work on the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. Like the Trafficking in Persons report which monitors countries' records on human trafficking, the USCIRF annual report exposes lawbreakers and violators of human rights—and recommends what actions should be taken.

That's why I supported House passage of **S. 2078** which reauthorizes USCIRF until 2019 so it can continue its important work.

[China Commission Reports Deterioration in Human Rights](#)



Speaking of China, the 2015 Annual Report of the bipartisan, bicameral **Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC)**, on which I sit, has been released. I believe the report (available at www.cecc.gov) not only highlights human rights abuses and violations, but presents pertinent recommendations for how to address them.

[Click here to read the report.](#)

Increasing Food Security Worldwide

As Executive Committee-member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I have co-sponsored the **Global Food Security Act of 2015 (H.R. 1567)**, a bill with the goal to reduce global poverty and hunger, achieve food security, and improve nutrition, especially for women and children in developing countries. The act prioritizes country ownership, sustainable agriculture development, and nutrition for children during the critical 1,000 days of life from conception to age two.

It is clear a collective approach and supporting less developed countries is key to fighting global poverty. By collaborating with organizations in developing countries and by focusing on women and children, we make sure that we target society's most vulnerable populations. This strategy also makes sure that taxpayer dollars are used in the most efficient and effective way.

Launching the Congressional Prize Caucus



I'm a firm believer in enlisting the private sector to innovate in all areas of discovery, such as space exploration and health care. Prize competitions are one way to spur research and excitement around the big issues facing our nation.

Along with my friend Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL-03), I launched the first-ever **Congressional Prize Caucus** at an event hosted in conjunction with [XPRIZE](#). Private foundations have been able to tackle problems in ways the government can't always do. What's exciting about these competitions is how they knock down the barriers to entry, like applying for grants, which can discourage the participation of underrepresented groups, inhibiting innovation and a broader participation in our high-tech economy.

It is my hope that the Caucus will increase awareness and support further action for prize competitions, a crucial tool to spur innovation, engage citizen solvers, address tough problems and advance core missions.

At the event, we enjoyed hands-on demonstrations from current and former XPRIZE competition teams, along with NASA and other agencies.

[Click here for my Facebook photo album of the event.](#)

If you haven't already, be sure to [like my Facebook page](#), follow me on Twitter ([@RepHultgren](#)), or [check out my YouTube page](#) to stay informed on everything I'm doing on your behalf in Washington and in Illinois.

As always, thank you for the honor and privilege of serving you.

In Your Service,



Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress
14th District, Illinois

Randy in the News

- [How Can US Prevent Annihilation of Christians by ISIS?](#) (Christian Post)
- [Hultgren encourages high schoolers to apply to nation's service academies](#) (Kendall County Now)
- [Inside the Beltway: And the Winner Is](#) (Washington Times)
- [Mooseheart students tour manufacturers in Cary, Spring Grove](#) (Northwest Herald)
- [Randy Hultgren Keeps His Eye on Government Prizes](#) (Roll Call)
- [Renewal of religious watchdog panel awaits Obama signature](#) (Washington Times)
- [Rep. Hultgren Pushing Bill to Help Christian Refugees](#) (Newsmax)

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