

BIOGRAPHY

Frank Wolf has been widely recognized as the “conscience” of the Congress. First elected in 1980, he announced in December 2013 that he would leave the House of Representatives at the end of his 17th term to focus exclusively on human rights and religious freedom.

In announcing his decision, Wolf said that as a follower of Jesus, he is called to work for justice and reconciliation, and to be an advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves. In January 2015, Wolf was appointed the first-ever Wilson Chair in Religious Freedom at Baylor University. That same month he joined the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative, a newly created religious freedom group, as Distinguished Senior Fellow.

Wolf is the author of the International Religious Freedom Act, which infused America’s first freedom – religious freedom – into U.S. foreign policy by creating the International Religious Freedom Office at the State Department headed by an Ambassador-at-Large. It also established the bipartisan, independent U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom as both a watchdog of repressive regimes and a truth-teller to our own State Department, which is too often reluctant to champion human rights issues abroad lest it complicate bilateral relations.

Wolf also is the author of the legislation to create a special envoy at the U.S. State Department to advocate for religious minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia. Long before the “Arab Spring” turned into an “Arab Winter,” Wolf sounded the alarm about the worsening plight of religious minorities, notably the ancient Christian communities in both [Iraq](#) and [Egypt](#).

Wolf founded and served as co-chairman of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a bipartisan organization made up of nearly 200 Members of Congress who work together to raise awareness about international human rights issues. He has traveled to Ethiopia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and other countries in Africa to see firsthand the tremendous suffering due to corrupt governments, war, AIDS and famine. He led the first congressional delegation to Darfur. He also has worked to call attention to the human rights abuses and religious persecution in the People’s Republic of China, Tibet, Romania, Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya, Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and the Middle East. Wolf’s 2011 memoir, "Prisoner of Conscience," focuses on some of the work he has done.

Wolf has been honored by a number of organizations for his work on human rights and religious persecution. Among them: the Presidential Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights; the Christian Legal Society’s William Bentley Ball Life and Religious Liberty Defense Award; the Alliance for Defending Freedom’s Originalism & Religious Freedom Award; and Prison Fellowship Ministries William Wilberforce Award. He also received the 2014 Democracy Service Medal from the National Endowment for Democracy and the Leadership Award from Freedom House. Wolf was named World Magazine's Daniel of the Year for 2014.

In addition to his work on human rights and religious persecution, Wolf has been a leader in a number of other areas in Congress addressing some of the most challenging issues of our time. He is the author of the legislation that created the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, also known as the Baker-Hamilton Commission, which played a critical role in building public support among the American people for the “surge” of U.S. troops in 2007 that effectively defeated the insurgency.

He was the driving force behind the National Commission on Terrorism, the National Gambling Impact Study Commission and the Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography, also known as the Meese Commission. He also worked with Mothers Against Drunk Driving to lower the national blood alcohol, making .08 BAC the new standard for drunk driving.

Wolf authored legislation to create a National Hunger Commission to find ways to alleviate hunger in the United States. He also successfully pushed for the creation of a bipartisan blue ribbon commission to reform our nation’s prisons named after the late Chuck Colson, the founder of Prison Fellowship.

Wolf was born in 1939 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He received his B.A. degree from Penn State University in 1961 and his law degree from Georgetown University in 1965. He lives in Vienna, Virginia, with his wife, Carolyn. They have five adult children and 16 grandchildren.