

**SUBSTITUTE FOR
HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 148**

1 A resolution to urge Congress to appropriate funds to assist
2 and provide medical aid to the community of Qaraqosh/Bakhdida,
3 Iraq, following a devastating fire at a local wedding.

4 Whereas, On September 26, 2023, an unthinkable tragedy struck
5 the city of Qaraqosh/Bakhdida in the Nineveh governorate of
6 northern Iraq. As a newlywed couple celebrated their union
7 surrounded by friends and family, fireworks erupted on the dance
8 floor and ignited the banquet hall, engulfing the venue in a blaze.
9 In an instant, what should have been the happiest moment in a young
10 couple's life became a horrifying nightmare. In the ensuing chaos,
11 attendees struggled to escape the building. It was later discovered
12 that the venue was constructed of highly flammable material, had no
13 emergency exits, and was filled far beyond its capacity - a perfect
14 storm for tragedy. While it is reported that the bride and groom

1 thankfully survived, Iraqi officials have indicated that at least
2 107 attendees lost their lives while an additional 82 were injured.
3 Surviving victims suffered extreme burns and other physical and
4 psychological injuries that will necessitate specialized care -
5 care that the local medical community in Qaraqosh/Bakhdida may be
6 unequipped to sufficiently provide; and

7 Whereas, Medical facilities in Qaraqosh/Bakhdida are
8 insufficiently equipped to provide the necessary medical care for
9 the survivors of this tragic fire. It has been reported that local
10 hospitals in Qaraqosh/Bakhdida - a city home to only 35,000 people
11 - have been overwhelmed with the sudden influx of victims needing
12 comprehensive and intense medical intervention. Unable to cope with
13 the stress, medical professionals in Qaraqosh/Bakhdida have already
14 begun transferring their patients to burn facilities in other
15 countries, desperately attempting to ensure that the victims of
16 this fire receive the best care possible given the dire
17 circumstances; and

18 Whereas, The United States has a proven track record
19 indicating our commitment to offering humanitarian assistance to
20 those in need across the world. Our status as a world leader places
21 us in the fortunate position to be able to demonstrate that
22 commitment once more by providing aid to the victims of the fire in
23 Qaraqosh/Bakhdida. There are few ways in which the vast resources
24 at the disposal of our federal government can be better spent than
25 by offering support to communities in need. By offering medical
26 assistance and other desperately needed resources to the victims of
27 the Qaraqosh/Bakhdida fire and the medical professionals working
28 tirelessly on their behalf, the federal government would
29 demonstrate the compassion of the American people and our

1 commitment to promoting peace, stability, and well-being in Iraq
2 and the world beyond; and

3 Whereas, The state of Michigan has particularly strong ties to
4 the Assyrian-Chaldean-Syriac people, the primary ethnic demographic
5 of the city of Qaraqosh/Bakhdida. The Assyrian-Chaldean-Syriac
6 diaspora has established deep roots in our state, which hosts the
7 largest population of this people in the nation. The contributions
8 made by this community to our state's rich culture and robust
9 economy cannot be quantified. Therefore, we recognize that Michigan
10 maintains a vested interest in supporting our friends and neighbors
11 in Qaraqosh/Bakhdida, further strengthening ties long established
12 between our distant communities; now, therefore, be it

13 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge
14 Congress to appropriate funds to assist and provide medical aid to
15 the community of Qaraqosh/Bakhdida, Iraq, following a devastating
16 fire at a local wedding; and be it further

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