



PROTECT OUR SHARED CULTURAL HERITAGE

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to pass H.R. 1493, which imposes import restrictions on cultural materials illegally removed from Syria after March 2011.

BILL OVERVIEW

This legislation will impose import restrictions on cultural materials illegally removed from Syria after the beginning of its civil war in March 2011 and will fulfill United States obligations under U.N. Security Council Resolution 2199. In addition, the legislation will provide a sense of Congress that the White House should establish an inter-agency committee, under the auspices of the Department of State, to coordinate all federal agency activities that concern protection of cultural property abroad. Such coordination is needed to reduce duplication of effort, increase effectiveness of efforts, and ensure that those agencies with special expertise are called upon in appropriate circumstances.

The House passed H.R. 1493 in June 2015. In February 2016, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the bill with an amendment. We urge the Senate to pass H.R. 1493 and the House and Senate to work together to reconcile the House and Senate Bills.

H.R. 1493 SERVES NATIONAL INTERESTS

- The archaeological remains of the Middle East, North Africa, and the broader Mediterranean Basin are a significant part of our shared cultural heritage.
- This heritage is increasingly subject to damage, destruction and looting of sites and repositories as a part of armed conflict and other threats.
- The sale of looted archeological objects funds the terrorist activities of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). This bill will ensure that the United States is not a market for these objects.
- The destruction of sites and historic structures is another form of ISIL terrorism perpetrated on the local populations
- The destruction of cultural heritage diminishes our ability to learn, reconstruct, and understand our past.