

# Human Rights Brief

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## Legislative Watch

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## LEGISLATIVE WATCH

Legislative Watch reports on pending U.S. legislation relevant to human rights and humanitarian law. This list is not meant to be comprehensive.

### Anti-Atrocity Alien Deportation Act of 1999, H.R. 3058

**Major Sponsor:** Rep. Mark Foley (R-FL)

**Status:** Referred to the House Committee on Judiciary on October 12, 1999; referred to the House Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims on October 21, 1999.

**Substance:** This bill amends the Immigration and Nationality Act to make aliens who committed acts of torture abroad inadmissible into the United States. It also directs the Attorney General to establish an Office of Special Investigations in the Department of Justice to investigate and take legal action to remove, denaturalize, or prosecute any alien found to be in violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

### Mothers and Newborns Health Insurance Act of 1999, S. 1717

**Major Sponsor:** Sen. Christopher S. Bond (R-MO)

**Status:** Referred to the Senate Committee on Finance on October 12, 1999.

**Substance:** This bill amends the Social Security Act to grant low-income women assistance for pregnancy-related needs. Currently, federal law prevents states from using CHIP funds to provide care to low-income women over the age of 19. The bill provides for optional coverage by allowing state Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) to provide for coverage of pregnancy-related assistance for targeted low-income pregnant women. The bill also provides for the automatic enrollment of the children born to the women receiving pregnancy-related assistance until the child reaches one year of age.

### The Refugee Protection Act of 1999, S. 1940

**Major Sponsor:** Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT)

**Status:** Referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on November 17, 1999.

**Substance:** This bill amends the Immigration and Nationality Act expedited removal procedures and improves due process procedures in the U.S. asylum system. The bill provides for the following major changes: (1) ending routine expedited removal procedures; (2) limiting summary inspection procedures to "emergency migration situations;" (3) providing for de novo review by an immigration judge of orders regarding summary inspections and credible fear determinations where the alien has been

found to be inadmissible for asylum; (4) allowing exceptions to summary inspection procedures for aliens fleeing countries with poor human rights records, aliens whose governments do not enjoy full diplomatic relations with the United States and who arrive by aircraft at a port of entry, and when the alien is a child unaccompanied by a parent or guardian; and (5) creating a "good-cause" exception to the one-year limit for filing asylum claims for immigrants already in the United States.

### Alliance with Colombia and the Andean Region (ALIANZA) Act of 1999, S. 1758

**Major Sponsor:** Sen. Paul Coverdell (R-GA)

**Status:** Referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on October 20, 1999.

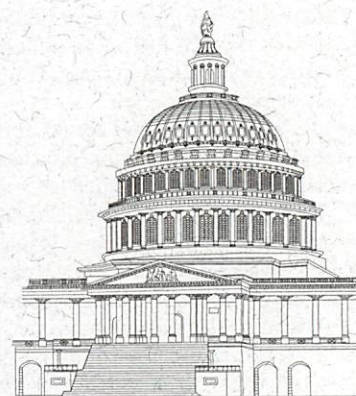
**Substance:** This bill authorizes support for Colombia, through a US \$1.63 billion aid package, to secure peace and the rule of law, and seeks to enhance the effectiveness of anti-drug efforts. It includes the creation, by the executive branch, of a special coordinator on Colombia who will have authority to implement a regional strategy and to coordinate efforts for political and financial support of Colombia. It also creates a U.S. emergency humanitarian assistance fund for Colombia's internally displaced population. It supports efforts by the Colombian Attorney General to investigate drug trafficking and human rights abuses by irregular forces and security forces. Furthermore, it allows the Secretary of State to deny visas to aliens involved in drug trafficking and human rights violations in Colombia (subject to certain exceptions). The bill also provides funding for upgrading Colombia's military hardware and for mobilizing Colombian security forces against the "narcotrafficking" threat. To support democracy, peace, the rule of law, and human rights in Colombia, the U.S. President is authorized to deploy international observers and to support internationally recognized non-governmental human rights organizations working in Colombia.

### Child Labor Free Consumer Information Act of 1999, S. 1549

**Major Sponsor:** Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)

**Status:** Referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce on August 5, 1999.

**Substance:** This bill creates a voluntary labeling system for apparel and sporting goods made without abusive and exploitative child labor. The bill creates the "Child Labor



Free Commission," which shall be composed of 17 members, including various appointed government officials, representatives of non-governmental and labor organizations, and representatives of the apparel and sporting goods industry. Any entity intending to use a label referred to in this Act will submit notification to the Commission, which will contain detailed information as to the location of the manufacturer. The Commission will review the notification and inform the Secretary of Labor of its findings. The Secretary of Labor will grant permission to use the label. False indications will result in substantial fines, which will go to a specific fund for programs to eliminate child labor.

### Sudan Peace Act of 1999, S. 1453

**Major Sponsor:** Sen. Bill Frist, (R-TN)

**Status:** Passed Senate with an amendment by unanimous consent on November 19, 1999; referred to the House Committee on International Relations on January 27, 2000.

**Substance:** The bill facilitates famine relief efforts and a comprehensive solution to the war in Sudan. The bill includes: the maintenance and multilateralization of sanctions against the Government of Sudan; the support of a viable democratic civil authority and institutions in areas of Sudan outside government control; and the strengthening of mechanisms to provide humanitarian relief to those areas. Under the bill, the U.S. President shall develop a contingency plan to provide U.S. government and privately donated relief to all affected areas in Sudan, in the event the Government of Sudan imposes a ban on United Nations' air transport relief flights. 🌐