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1                                    AMENDMENT TO HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 68

2            AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_\_ . Amend House Joint Resolution 68 by  
3 replacing everything after the heading with the following:

4            "WHEREAS, During Operation Iraqi Freedom, Pentagon  
5 officials discovered a trove of thousands of centuries-old  
6 artifacts from Iraq's Jewish community in the basement of  
7 Saddam Hussein's intelligence service headquarters; and

8            WHEREAS, These artifacts were improperly seized by force  
9 from their rightful owners by the regime of Saddam Hussein,  
10 which then stored them in a flooded basement, most likely in an  
11 effort to marginalize the culture and history of Mesopotamian  
12 Jews; and

13            WHEREAS, The artifacts were brought to the United States in  
14 2003, where they were carefully cleaned, preserved,  
15 photographed, and displayed at the National Archives; and

1           WHEREAS, The United States Department of State has  
2 announced its plans to return the Iraqi Jewish Archive  
3 collection to the government of Iraq in the summer of 2014,  
4 claiming the Iraqi people are the rightful owners; and

5           WHEREAS, More than 40 American Jewish groups have expressed  
6 their deep misgivings about returning the artifacts to Iraq,  
7 citing "uncertain conditions" in Iraq and calling for the  
8 artifacts to be given to the synagogues of Iraqi Jews around  
9 the world; and

10           WHEREAS, The Pentagon official who discovered the  
11 collection, Harold Rhode, has likened the prospective return of  
12 the artifacts to "giving the personal effects of Jews killed in  
13 the Holocaust back to Germany"; and

14           WHEREAS, Religious documents and artifacts such as these  
15 are sacred and should properly be returned to the Jewish  
16 communities from which they were stolen; and

17           WHEREAS, The United States Senate has unanimously passed  
18 Senate Resolution 333 calling for the United States to  
19 renegotiate the return of the Iraqi Jewish Archive collection  
20 to Iraq; and

1           WHEREAS, United States House Resolution 505, which echoes  
2           United States Senate Resolution 333, was introduced into the  
3           United States House of Representatives; therefore, be it

4           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
5           NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
6           SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we urge the United States  
7           Department of State to renegotiate with the Government of Iraq  
8           the provisions of the original agreement in order to ensure  
9           that the Iraqi Jewish Archive collection be kept in a place  
10          where its long-term preservation and care can be guaranteed;  
11          and be it further

12          RESOLVED, That we urge the relevant authorities to house  
13          the Iraqi Jewish Archive collection in a location that is  
14          accessible to scholars and to Iraqi Jews and their descendants  
15          who have a personal interest in it; and be it further

16          RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
17          delivered to the President of the United States, the Secretary  
18          of State of the United States, and the members of the Illinois  
19          congressional delegation."