

units must meet minimum standards of health and safety, as determined by the PHA. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the PHA on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. Under certain circumstances, if authorized by the PHA, a family may use its voucher to purchase a modest home.

Eligibility for a housing voucher is determined by the PHA based on the total annual gross income and family size and is limited to U.S. citizens and specified categories of non-citizens who have eligible immigration status. In general, the family's income may not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which the family chooses to live. By law, a PHA must provide 75 percent of its voucher to applicants whose incomes do not exceed 30 percent of the area median income.

Since the demand for housing assistance often exceeds the limited resources available to HUD and the local housing agencies, long waiting periods are common. In fact, a PHA may close its waiting list when it has more families on the list than can be assisted in the near future.

PHAs may establish local preferences for selecting applicants from its waiting list. For example, PHAs may give a preference to a family who is (1) homeless or living in substandard housing, (2) paying more than 50 percent of its income for rent, or (3) involuntarily displaced. Families who qualify for any such local preferences move ahead of other families on the list who does not qualify for any preference. Each PHA has the discretion to establish local preferences to reflect the housing needs and priorities of its particular community.

When the voucher holder finds a unit that it wishes to occupy and reaches an agreement with the landlord over the lease terms, the PHA determines a payment standard that is the amount generally needed to rent a moderately-priced dwelling unit in the local housing market and that is used to calculate the amount of housing assistance a family will receive. However, the payment standard does not limit and does not affect the amount of rent a landlord may charge or the family may pay. A family which receives a housing voucher can select a unit with a rent that is below or above the payment standard. The housing voucher family must pay 30 percent of its monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities, and if the unit rent is greater than the payment standard, the family is required to pay the additional amount. By law, whenever a family moves to a new unit where the rent exceeds the payment standard, the family may not pay more than 40 percent of its adjusted monthly income for rent. The PHA calculates the maximum amount of housing assistance allowable. The maximum housing assistance is generally the lesser of the payment standard minus 30 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income or the gross rent for the unit minus 30 percent of monthly adjusted income.

The family self-sufficiency (FSS) is a HUD program that encourages communities to develop local strategies to help voucher families obtain employment that will lead to economic independence and self-sufficiency. Public housing agencies work with welfare agencies, schools, businesses, and other local partners

to develop a comprehensive program that gives participating FSS family members the skills and experience to enable them to obtain employment that pays a living wage. FSS was established in 1990 by section 554 of the National Affordable Housing Act. It is a successor program to project self-sufficiency and operation bootstrap. FSS program services may include, but are not limited to: child care, transportation, education, job training and employment counseling, substance/alcohol abuse treatment or counseling, household skill training, and homeownership counseling.

For the most part, PHAs must rely on their own or other local resources to operate FSS programs. However, under the authority of annual appropriations acts, HUD has been able to provide some funding for FSS program coordinators to assist PHAs in operating housing choice voucher FSS programs. With this act, the secretary shall establish a fee for the costs incurred in administering the self-sufficiency program under this section to assist families receiving voucher assistance through section 8. A public housing agency serving 25 or more participants in the family self-sufficiency program under this section shall receive a fee equal to the costs of employing one full-time family self-sufficiency coordinator. An agency serving fewer than 25 such participants shall receive a prorated fee. An agency that meets minimum performance standards shall receive an additional fee sufficient to cover the costs of employing a second family self-sufficiency coordinator if the agency has 75 or more participating families, and a third such coordinator if it has 125 or more participating families. An agency that received funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for more than three such coordinators in any of fiscal years 1999 through 2008 shall receive funding for the highest number of coordinators funded in a single fiscal year during that period, provided they meet applicable size and performance standards. For the first year in which a public housing agency exercises its right to develop a family self-sufficiency program for its residents, it shall be entitled to funding to cover the costs of up to one family self-sufficiency coordinator, based on the size specified in its action plan for such program.

The family self-sufficiency program will truly benefit those who really need a helping hand out of poverty. However, there needs to be monetary assistance given to the Department of Housing and Urban Development so that they might hire the needed staff to maximize the use of federal funds and improve the lives of others. The family self-sufficiency act will ensure that these objectives are met. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting "The Family Self-Sufficiency Act of 2009."

Mrs. BIGGERT. With that, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank again JUDY BIGGERT for her leadership in preventing homelessness. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 46, the Families Self-Sufficiency Act of 2009.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 46.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### RAISING THE CASE OF ROBERT LEVINSON WITH IRAN

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 36) calling on the President and the allies of the United States to engage with officials of the Government of Iran to raise the case of Robert Levinson at every opportunity, urging officials of the Government of Iran to fulfill their promises of assistance to the family of Robert Levinson, and calling on the Government of Iran to share the results of its investigation into the disappearance of Robert Levinson with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

#### H. CON. RES. 36

Whereas United States citizen Robert Levinson is a retired agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a resident of Florida, the husband of Christine Levinson, and father of their 7 children;

Whereas Robert Levinson traveled from Dubai to Kish Island, Iran, on March 8, 2007;

Whereas, after traveling to Kish Island and checking into the Hotel Maryam, he disappeared on March 9, 2007;

Whereas neither his family nor the United States Government has received further information on his fate or whereabouts;

Whereas March 9, 2009, marks the second anniversary of the disappearance of Robert Levinson;

Whereas the Government of Switzerland, which has served as the Protecting Power for the United States in the Islamic Republic of Iran in the absence of diplomatic relations between the Government of the United States and the Government of Iran since 1980, has continuously pressed the Government of Iran on the case of Robert Levinson and lent vital assistance and support to the Levinson family during their December 2007 visit to Iran;

Whereas officials of the Government of Iran promised their continued assistance to the relatives of Robert Levinson during the visit of the family to the Islamic Republic of Iran in December 2007; and

Whereas the Government of Iran, including through a statement made during an interview with NBC News broadcast on July 28, 2008, has declared that its officials are willing to cooperate with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the search for Robert Levinson: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—*

(1) commends the Embassy of Switzerland in Tehran, Iran, and the Government of

Switzerland for the ongoing assistance to the Government of the United States and to the family of Robert Levinson, particularly during the visit by Christine Levinson and other relatives to Iran in December 2007;

(2) notes that Iranian officials ensured the safety of the family of Robert Levinson during their December 2007 visit to Iran, and have promised their continued assistance;

(3) urges the Government of Iran, as a humanitarian gesture, to intensify its cooperation on the case of Robert Levinson with the Embassy of Switzerland in Tehran and to share the results of its investigation into the disappearance of Robert Levinson with the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

(4) urges the President and the allies of the United States to raise at every opportunity in all appropriate multilateral and bilateral fora the case of Robert Levinson; and

(5) expresses sympathy to the family of Robert Levinson during this trying period.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this very important resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, last month, President Obama delivered a very important video message to the Iranian people and to Iran's leaders, coinciding with Iran's Festival of Nowruz, a 12-day holiday marking the new year.

Mr. Speaker, I support President Obama's spirit of engagement, and I share his view that the United States and the international community should try to persuade Iran, through both diplomacy and economic sanctions, to comply with its legal obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and under numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Robert Levinson, a retired agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, disappeared in Iran over 2 years ago. There is no better time than now, in the spirit of engagement with Iran, for the Government of Iran to share the results of its investigation into Mr. Levinson's disappearance with the FBI. Indeed, the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in an interview with NBC on July 28, 2008, stated that the Iranian Government was willing to cooperate with the FBI in the search for Mr. Robert Levinson. Iranian officials also promised their continued assistance to his relatives during the Levinson family's visit to Iran in December of 2007.

This resolution under consideration urges President Obama and our allies

to raise the case of Mr. Levinson with the Iranians at every opportunity. Indeed, this process has already begun. During a March 31 conference in The Hague, Ambassador Richard Holbrook handed an Iranian diplomat a diplomatic letter asking Tehran to ensure the quick and safe return of Mr. Levinson, as well as freelance journalist Roxana Saberi and student Esha Momeni, both of whom are being held in Iran. The resolution also urges the Government of Iran to fulfill its pledge to cooperate with the FBI. Both of these requests are more than fully appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to the Levinson family. And we remain deeply committed to learning Mr. Levinson's fate in Iran and, if possible, hopefully returning him home safe and sound.

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I strongly support this resolution, and I urge all my colleagues to do likewise. And I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) for introducing this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, over 2 years after disappearing on Kish Island in Iran, Robert Levinson, who my colleague has just described as a U.S. citizen and a resident of Florida, remains missing. During that time, the regime in Iran has continually obstructed efforts by the United States Government to investigate Mr. Levinson's disappearance. As Senator BILL NELSON stated on January 13 of this year at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in Iran "the door has been closed at every single turn."

Mr. Levinson is a 28-year veteran of the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Administration. He and his family, including his wife and seven children, deserve our every effort to determine his status and hopefully to secure his freedom and safe return home. Therefore, I strongly support House Concurrent Resolution 36, which urges the Iranian Government to intensify its cooperation on Mr. Levinson's case, with the Swiss Embassy in Tehran, and to share the results of its investigation with the FBI.

This legislation also urges the President and U.S. allies to raise Mr. Levinson's case in all appropriate multilateral and bilateral forums and expresses our sympathy to Mr. Levinson's family during this very difficult and trying time.

I thank my good friend and colleague Mr. WEXLER, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, for introducing this resolution.

This is the kind of thing, Mr. Speaker, that everybody in the world ought

to be concerned about. We have a young reporter who has disappeared over there and is unaccounted for. Mr. Levinson is unaccounted for. This Government of Iran should join the family of nations and start being like everybody else and admiring and living up to the human rights that we all respect and admire.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important and timely resolution. As we have spoken to it, I think we all see its urgency, its humanitarian nature, and the very important challenge to the people of Iran and the leaders of Iran to do the right thing in this case.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I introduced House Concurrent Resolution 36 earlier this year to shed light on my constituent from Coral Springs, Florida, Robert Levinson, who disappeared from Iran's Kish Island on March 9, 2007. More than two years later, there are disturbingly few known details about his whereabouts.

What we do know, however, is that Mr. Levinson, a former FBI agent, was last heard from on March 8, 2007 by his wife Christine, while he was working in Dubai as a private investigator. According to his family, he checked into a hotel on Kish Island and checked out the following morning to fly back to the United States. Unfortunately, Mr. Levinson never arrived at the airport for his flight, and there is no accounting for what happened to him after he left the hotel.

In December 2007, the Levinson family, with assistance from Swiss officials in Tehran, traveled to the hotel where Mr. Levinson was last seen and passed out flyers in Farsi with his photo. They also met with local Iranian authorities to seek their assistance in gaining information about Mr. Levinson's disappearance. The authorities in Iran pledged to assist the Levinson family in their efforts to determine Robert's whereabouts and to investigate the circumstances surrounding his disappearance. Despite its pledge, the government of Iran has not followed through on its promises to the Levinson family. In fact, the Iranian government has stonewalled any effort to gain pertinent information—claiming they have zero knowledge about Mr. Levinson's whereabouts.

I want to praise the decision of the Obama Administration to raise Mr. Levinson's case directly with the Iranian government. During last week's hearing in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I raised Mr. Levinson's disappearance with Secretary of State Clinton, and she confirmed that Mr. Levinson was mentioned in a letter delivered by Ambassador Holbrooke to Iranian officials at The Hague and reiterated her unwavering commitment to press this issue at every opportunity.

While I am certain that Secretary Clinton and the Obama Administration will make every attempt to bring Mr. Levinson's home, it is critical that Congress express its unequivocal support for her efforts and send a clear statement that the Administration must employ every diplomatic tool at its disposal to locate Mr. Levinson and return him to the United States.

House Concurrent Resolution 36 calls on President Obama and allies of the United States around the world to engage with officials of the Government of Iran to raise the

case of Robert Levinson at every opportunity. It also urges officials of the Government of Iran to fulfill their promises of assistance to the family of Robert Levinson, and calls upon Iran to share the results of its investigation into his disappearance with the FBI. Passage of this resolution sends a clear signal that the Congress stands with the Levinson family and believes all efforts should be exhausted to ensure Robert Levinson is found and brought home safely.

I want to once again express my unwavering solidarity and backing for the Levinson family and offer all of my support in their efforts to return Robert Levinson home. I urge all of my colleagues to support the passage of this resolution.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 36, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title was amended so as to read: "A concurrent resolution calling on the President and the allies of the United States to raise in all appropriate bilateral and multilateral fora the case of Robert Levinson at every opportunity, urging Iran to fulfill their promises of assistance to the family of Robert Levinson, and calling on Iran to share the results of its investigation into the disappearance of Robert Levinson with the Federal Bureau of Investigation".

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### MOURNING VICTIMS OF GUATEMALA LANDSLIDE AND COSTA RICA EARTHQUAKE

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 76) mourning the horrific loss of life in January 2009 caused by a landslide in Guatemala and an earthquake in Costa Rica and expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should assist the affected people and communities, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

##### H. RES. 76

Whereas, on January 4, 2009, millions of tons of earth fell onto a road in the Alta Verapaz area north of Guatemala City, Guatemala;

Whereas it is suspected that a geological fault triggered the movement of earth, sending 10,000,000 tons of mud and rock down a hillside onto a road that runs from San Cristobal Verapaz to Chicaman, north of Guatemala City;

Whereas at least 36 people were confirmed dead and up to 60 were missing, many of whom are coffee workers in the region;

Whereas rescue organizations, volunteers, and agencies from throughout Guatemala had been working at the site until danger of another landslide shut down the operation;

Whereas, on January 8, 2009, at 1:21PM, a 6.1 magnitude earthquake shook the Capital region of San Jose, Costa Rica, including the areas of Sarapiquí, Varablanca, and Poasito;

Whereas the earthquake's epicenter was 20 miles from San Jose at a depth of 21.7 miles and the shaking continued for 40 seconds;

Whereas 23 individuals were confirmed dead, over 100 were treated for injuries, and nearly a dozen went missing, including many buried by the resulting landslides;

Whereas 518 homes were destroyed to the point where they were uninhabitable, 26 kilometers of road were unusable, and 61 communities were affected;

Whereas roads, businesses, government buildings, and the popular tourist sites at the Poas Volcano and the La Paz waterfalls were severely damaged; and

Whereas Guatemala and Costa Rica have been frequently impacted by significant natural disasters, including those in the aftermath of Hurricane Stan in Guatemala in 2005 that led to hundreds of deaths: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved, That—*

(1) the House of Representatives—

(A) mourns the terrible loss of life caused by the landslide that occurred on January 4, 2009, in Guatemala and the earthquake on January 8, 2009, in Costa Rica;

(B) expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the many victims; and

(C) applauds the prompt humanitarian responses to these natural disasters by the Governments of Guatemala and Costa Rica; and

(2) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that it should be the policy of the United States to—

(A) continue technical assistance to Central American governments in order to strengthen their capacity at the national, provincial, and local levels in the area of disaster management coordination and preparedness, including implementing information and communications systems to help with the response to natural disasters; and

(B) work closely with the governments of these countries to improve disaster mitigation techniques and compliance among all key sectors of their societies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank Congressman DAN BURTON for introducing this very important and timely resolution, which mourns the terrible loss of life caused by two natural disasters that occurred 4 days apart in Cen-

tral America in January of this year. The first was a landslide that occurred on January 4, 2009, in Guatemala. The second was an earthquake on January 8, 2009, in Costa Rica.

The resolution before us conveys the deepest condolences of Congress to the families of the victims and urges that the United States Government maintain technical assistance to Central American countries regarding disaster management and mitigation.

On January 4, 2009, millions of tons of earth fell onto a road in the Alta Verapaz area, north of Guatemala City in Guatemala. Apparently, a geological fault triggered the movement of earth, sending 10 million tons of mud and rock down a hillside onto a road that runs from San Cristobal Verapaz to Chicaman, north of Guatemala City. At least 38 people were confirmed dead and up to 60 were missing, many of whom were coffee workers in the region.

Four days later, on January 8, 2009, a 6.1 magnitude earthquake shook the capital region of San Jose, Costa Rica. The earthquake's epicenter was 20 miles from San Jose at a depth of 21.7 miles, and the shaking continued for 40 seconds. Twenty-three individuals were confirmed dead, over 100 were treated for injuries, and nearly a dozen went missing, including many buried by resulting landslides.

Guatemala and Costa Rica have been frequently impacted by significant natural disasters including those in the aftermath of Hurricane Stan in Guatemala in 2005 that led to hundreds of deaths.

I agree wholeheartedly that it should be the policy of the United States to continue technical assistance to governments in the region at the national, provincial, and local levels in the area of the disaster management coordination. It is also essential that the United States take a long-term view with its regional partners and help them improve disaster mitigation techniques.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this very important and necessary and timely resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank my colleague from Georgia, DAVID SCOTT, for cosponsoring this resolution.

I think everybody in this body is very concerned about the tragedies that befall human beings here and around the world.

As my colleague said, this past January two significant natural disasters wreaked havoc on the Central American nations of Costa Rica and Guatemala and took a terrible and destructive toll on people in these communities.

In Guatemala, as coffee workers were returning from long days of work in the Alta Verapaz region, thousands of