

can take a meaningful step, a concrete step, an action item toward justice for survivors. And then, all of those lofty words that are laid upon the table on this bill that don't really apply, would really apply to this bill, the Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act. We owe it to the survivors. We owe it to their families.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH), who is a very well-respected member of our Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Ranking Member ENGEL, for his hard work on this bill and for yielding. I thank Chairman ROYCE as well.

I want to thank the many Members of Congress who have shown their unyielding commitment to caring for Holocaust survivors and ensuring that their needs are met, including the cosponsors of this bill, and, of course, the House bill's sponsors, Congressman CROWLEY and Congressman SMITH.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my friend and colleague, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her tireless efforts throughout her career on behalf of Holocaust survivors in our community in south Florida and everywhere they live.

Two weeks after we marked Yom HaShoah, it is fitting that Congress would consider this bill. I hope that the world is watching, because every year that we move away from the horrible atrocities of the Holocaust, we lose more and more survivors.

They are the people who survived Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibor, and other Nazi death camps. They are the people who survived the attempted genocide against them. Six million Jews perished. We must remember that every single victim, those who perished and those who survived, had a story. They had homes, they had businesses, family heirlooms, and personal possessions. As the Nazis stormed through Europe to wipe out European Jewry, they stole everything they could as they sent Jews to their death.

While no amount of money will ever erase these horrors, these survivors, their families, and their heirs deserve compensation for confiscated property, including Jewish communal, private, and heirless property.

In 2009, the United States joined 46 other countries and agreed to the Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets. This was a commitment by these countries to provide for the restitution of confiscated property. But 9 years later, many European countries have still failed to meet their commitments in this agreement. Some countries still haven't passed legislation to create for private property restitution, and we should call out their failures.

As we speak, thousands of survivors are in need of immediate and urgent

care and assistance. I am proud to represent a large community of survivors, and I see their critical needs going unmet day after day. This bill can be a tool to help us understand where the gaps lie in restitution programs, but it does not address, nor is it meant to address, the urgent need of survivors now. As they age, their needs grow. It is essential they receive the care they deserve. We must do everything to ensure that those needs are addressed.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This legislation is critical to ensuring that Holocaust survivors and their heirs are compensated. Restitution and return will represent another step moving past this heinous chapter of human history.

I want to thank my colleague and good friend, Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN, for her powerful remarks this afternoon and for her leadership for so many years in fighting for Holocaust survivors. I have met many of her constituents and many of my own who remain engaged in this prolonged battle for justice. I am a cosponsor of Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN's legislation, and I proudly support her in these efforts. I do hope that her bill will come to the floor as well.

□ 1615

I also support Congressmen CROWLEY and SMITH, as well as Senators BALDWIN and RUBIO, in the effort to ensure that property is restituted and returned through the JUST Act. This legislation has already passed the Senate; so when we pass it here, it will go right to the President's desk for signing. With this vote, we can push it across the finish line.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we have been contacted on behalf of the JUST Act by a number of organizations in support of the Senate bill. The major American Jewish organizations supporting this measure are the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Federations of North America, the B'nai B'rith, the HIAS refugee assistance organization, Union for Reform Judaism, Orthodox Union, World Jewish Restitution Organization, and others; and they have argued that the Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today Act, or JUST Act, as the Senate calls it, is a measure that will have an outsized impact in encouraging countries to continue working to make amends for the evils of the Holocaust. That is what drove the Senate to pass this bill.

Now, just to go into the details again a little bit: it was in 2009 that rep-

resentatives of this country and 40 other countries agreed to a set of principles to address the welfare of survivors, to address Holocaust education, and to address issues related to restitution for seized property, among other issues.

Now, that is what these 40 nations committed to. So 10 years have passed, approximately, and it is time that we take stock of the work under way because, while a number of these partner countries have made great strides to uphold their commitments under the agreement, you and I know—everybody here knows—that some countries have fallen short.

And this legislation, which charges the State Department with the responsibility for this important report—and let's call it naming and shaming; that is basically what is intended here—gives the United States another tool to seek justice for Holocaust survivors, to seek justice for the families of Holocaust victims. And it is our hope that passing this bill will motivate improvements even before the report is penned. Already we have seen some of these countries overseas renew their engagement on this issue, and that is the leverage that we want to deploy.

It is a devastating issue to even begin a discussion because we can never compensate Holocaust survivors truly for the unbelievable horror and devastation that they suffered. But from the perspective of most of the organizations that have talked to us about the bill, their point would be: We can try. We can try to restore what is rightfully theirs. And part of the trying, from their standpoint, is to shed light on the efforts, or lack thereof, that other countries are making. And this bill does that. It unanimously passed the Senate for that reason.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all the Members here who participated today in the debate over this very difficult issue, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 447.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS AND HOSTAGE-TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4744) to impose additional sanctions with respect to serious human rights abuses of the Government of Iran, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4744

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act”.

SEC. 2. UNITED STATES POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Iran is a member of the United Nations, voted for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, among other international human rights treaties.

(2) In violation of these and other international obligations, Iranian regime officials continue to violate the fundamental human rights of the Iranian people.

(3) The Iranian regime persecutes ethnic and religious minority groups, such as the Baha'is, Christians, Sufi, Sunni, and dissenting Shi'a Muslims (such as imprisoned Ayatollah Hossein Kazemeyni Boroujerdi), through harassment, arrests, and imprisonment, during which detainees have routinely been beaten, tortured, and killed.

(4) Following voting irregularities that resulted in the 2009 election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian regime brutally suppressed peaceful political dissent from wide segments of civil society during the Green Revolution in a cynical attempt to retain its undemocratic grip on power.

(5) Since February 2011 the leaders of Iran's Green Movement, former Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi, his wife Dr. Zahra Rahnavard, and former Speaker of the Majles (parliament) Mehdi Karroubi, have lived under strict house arrest, ordered by Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

(6) In 1999 the Iranian regime brutally suppressed a student revolt that was one of the largest mass uprisings up until that point in the country since 1979.

(7) Over a 4-month period in 1988, the Iranian regime carried out the barbaric mass executions of thousands of political prisoners by hanging and firing squad for refusing to renounce their political affiliations and in some cases for possessing political reading material, including prisoners of conscience, teenagers, and pregnant women. In a recently disclosed audiotape, the late Hussein Ali Montazeri, a grand ayatollah who served as former Supreme leader Khomeini's chief deputy, said that the 1988 mass killings were “the greatest crime committed during the Islamic Republic, for which history will condemn us”.

(8) Senior governmental, military, and public security officials in Iran have continued ordering, controlling, and committing egregious human rights violations that, in many cases, represent official policies of the Iranian regime.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the United States should—

(1) deny the Government of Iran the ability to continue to oppress the people of Iran and to use violence and executions to silence pro-democracy protestors;

(2) work with international partners to investigate human rights violations by senior officials of the Government of Iran, regardless of where or when such violations took place;

(3) support efforts made by the people of Iran to promote the establishment of basic freedoms that build the foundation for the emergence of a freely elected, open, non-corrupt and democratic political system;

(4) condemn Iranian human rights abuses against dissidents, including the massacre in 1988 and the suppression of political demonstrations in 1999, 2009, and 2017, and pressure the Government of Iran to provide family members detailed information that they

were denied about the final resting places of any missing victims of such abuses; and

(5) help the people of Iran produce, access, and share information freely and safely via the internet and other media.

(c) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States to stand with the people of Iran who seek the opportunity to freely elect a government of their choosing, and increase the utilization of all available authorities to impose sanctions on officials of the Government of Iran and other individuals responsible for serious human rights abuses.

SEC. 3. DETERMINATIONS WITH RESPECT TO IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS ON CERTAIN PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR OR COMPLICIT IN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, ENGAGING IN CENSORSHIP, ENGAGING IN THE DIVERSION OF GOODS INTENDED FOR THE PEOPLE OF IRAN, OR ENGAGING IN CORRUPTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report containing a determination of whether any senior officials of the Government of Iran or other Iranian persons meet the criteria described in—

(1) subsection (b) of section 105D of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010, as added by section 5 of this Act; or

(2) paragraph (3) or (4) of section 1263(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328; 22 U.S.C. 2656 note).

(b) REVIEW OF CERTAIN ENTITIES.—The report required under subsection (a) shall contain a review of any activities of cooperative foundations or bonyads in Iran with a capitalization that exceeds \$200,000,000 and that meet the criteria in paragraph (3) or (4) of section 1263(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328; 22 U.S.C. 2656 note) for purposes of corruption.

(c) FORM OF REPORT; PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—

(1) FORM.—The report required under subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex.

(2) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The unclassified portion of such report shall be made available to the public and posted on the internet website of the Department of the Treasury—

(A) in English, Farsi, Arabic, and Azeri; and

(B) in precompressed, easily downloadable versions that are made available in all appropriate formats.

(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

SEC. 4. UNITED STATES POLICY ON HOSTAGE-TAKING BY THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Since 1979 the Iranian regime has engaged in various destabilizing activities that undermine the national security of the United States and its allies and partners.

(2) These activities include the hostage-taking or prolonged arbitrary detentions of United States citizens and other persons with connections to Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and other nations allied with the United States.

(3) The Iranian regime has detained on fabricated claims a significant number of

United States citizens, including Siamak and Baquer Namazi and Xiyue Wang, as well as United States legal permanent resident, Nizar Zakka, in violation of international legal norms.

(4) The Iranian regime has not provided information on the whereabouts of or assistance in ensuring the prompt and safe return of Robert Levinson, despite repeated promises to do so, after he was kidnapped while visiting Iran's Kish Island on March 9, 2007—making him the longest held hostage in United States history.

(5) The Iranian regime reportedly uses hostages as leverage against foreign investors to exact business concessions in foreign investment deals.

(6) The type of hostage-taking enterprise put in place by the Iranian regime is a crime against humanity and a violation of customary international law.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the Administration should fully utilize all necessary and appropriate measures to prevent the Iranian regime from engaging in hostage-taking or the prolonged arbitrary detention of United States citizens or legal permanent resident aliens, to include—

(A) the use of extradition to try and convict those individuals responsible for ordering or controlling the hostage-taking or arbitrary detention of United States citizens; and

(B) the use of the Department of Homeland Security's Human Rights Violators and War Crimes Center to target such individuals; and

(2) the United States should encourage its allies and other affected countries to pursue the criminal prosecution and extradition of state and non-state actors in Iran that assist in or benefit from such hostage-taking to prevent such state and non-state actors from engaging in this practice in the future.

(c) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States Government not to pay ransom for the purpose of securing the release of United States citizens or legal permanent resident aliens taken hostage abroad.

(d) STRATEGY.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report that contains a strategy to prevent elements of the Iranian regime from engaging in hostage-taking or the prolonged arbitrary detention of United States citizens or legal permanent resident aliens.

SEC. 5. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO IRANIAN PERSONS WHO ENGAGE IN CERTAIN ACTIONS AGAINST UNITED STATES CITIZENS OR IRANIAN PERSONS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the United States should coordinate with United States allies and other allies and partners whose citizens may be subject to politically-motivated detention or trial in Iran, to apply sanctions against Iranian persons that are responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, such detention or trial.

(b) IN GENERAL.—Title I of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 is amended by inserting after section 105C (22 U.S.C. 8514c) the following:

“SEC. 105D. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO IRANIAN PERSONS WHO ENGAGE IN CERTAIN ACTIONS AGAINST UNITED STATES CITIZENS OR IRANIAN PERSONS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall impose sanctions described in section 105(c)

with respect to each person on the list required by subsection (b).

“(b) LIST OF IRANIAN PERSONS WHO ENGAGE IN CERTAIN ACTIONS AGAINST UNITED STATES CITIZENS OR IRANIAN PERSONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a list of Iranian persons that the President determines, are knowingly—

“(A) responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering or otherwise directing, the politically-motivated harassment, abuse, extortion, or extended detention or trial of citizens of the United States or United States legal permanent resident aliens, regardless of whether such actions occurred in Iran; or

“(B) responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering or otherwise directing, the politically-motivated harassment, abuse, extortion, or extended detention or trial of Iranians, Iranian residents, or persons of Iranian origin outside of Iran.

“(2) UPDATES OF LIST.—The President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees an updated list under paragraph (1)—

“(A) each time the President is required to submit an updated list to those committees under section 105(b)(2)(A); and

“(B) as new information becomes available.

“(3) FORM OF REPORT; PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—

“(A) FORM.—The list required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

“(B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The unclassified portion of the list required by paragraph (1) shall be made available to the public and posted on the websites of the Department of the Treasury and the Department of State.

“(C) APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS TO IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The President is authorized to impose sanctions described in paragraph (2) with respect to each person that is a family member of any person on the list required by subsection (b).

“(2) ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

“(A) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien who the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) knows, or has reason to believe, is a family member of any person on the list required by subsection (b) is—

“(i) inadmissible to the United States;

“(ii) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

“(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

“(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The issuing consular officer, the Secretary of State, or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) shall revoke any visa or other entry documentation issued to an alien who is a family member of any person on the list required by subsection (b) regardless of when issued.

“(ii) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A revocation under clause (i)—

“(I) shall take effect immediately; and

“(II) shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien's possession.

“(3) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions under paragraph (2) shall not apply to an alien if admitting the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United

States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

“(4) DEFINITION OF FAMILY MEMBER.—In this section, the term ‘family member’ means, with respect to an individual—

“(A) a spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandchild, or grandparent of the individual; and

“(B) a spouse's child, parent, or sibling.

“(d) TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.—The provisions of this section shall terminate on the date that is 30 days after the date on which the President—

“(1) determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the Government of Iran is no longer complicit in or responsible for the wrongful and unlawful detention of United States citizens or legal permanent resident aliens; and

“(2) transmits to the appropriate congressional committees the certification described in section 105(d) of this Act.”.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 105C the following new item:

“Sec. 105D. Imposition of sanctions with respect to Iranian persons who engage in certain actions against United States citizens or Iranian persons.”.

(d) AMENDMENTS TO GENERAL PROVISIONS.—Section 401 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8551) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “and 305” and inserting “, 105D, and 305”; and

(2) in subsection (b)(1)—

(A) by striking “or 105C(a)” and inserting “105C(a), or 105D(a)”; and

(B) by striking “or 105C(b)” and inserting “105C(b), or 105D(b)”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on H.R. 4744, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in January this body came together. It was a near unanimous vote to support the Iranian people, who were engaged in legitimate protests against a very oppressive regime. I want to thank Mr. MIKE MCCAUL here, chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, and Mr. ELIOT ENGEL, the ranking member of our Committee on Foreign Affairs, for their engagement in this issue.

At the time, we were witnessing tens of thousands of Iranians who had taken

to the streets in the largest demonstration that we had seen since the Green Revolution of 2009. The protests, aimed at economic stagnation, aimed at widespread corruption—and people were talking about that all the time—aimed at the Revolutionary Guard Corps' control over that economy because they had nationalized, seized, so much of that economy. And quickly we saw that spread across Iran, as Persians sought to exercise the fundamental right of freedom of expression, as people across that country, of every ethnicity and every religion, began to speak out.

Many demonstrators shouted slogans aimed at Iran's costly support for Syria's Bashar al-Assad, if you recall, from reading the press accounts. And they attacked, they argued about the cost, the support that went to the terrorist groups such as Hezbollah. Predictably, the Iranian regime moved swiftly to quash the demonstrations and throttle social media.

More than 1,000 Iranians were jailed, dozens were killed. H. Res. 676 condemned this brutal violence back in January, called for targeted sanctions to hold the regime to account. But today we act to make good on that call, because the bill before us today, Chairman MCCAUL's H.R. 4744, requires the administration to determine whether senior Iranian officials should be sanctioned for human rights abuses. And it also requires determinations on whether Iranian businesses should be sanctioned for public corruption with respect to those who are involved in corruption. And it mandates sanctions on those officials responsible for Iran's wrongful, politically motivated jailing of U.S. citizens.

Mr. Speaker, for years the regime in Tehran has systematically beat down all opposition inside Iran. It regularly uses brutal tactics back in Iran, including torture and mass executions, as it seeks to export violence and radical ideology abroad as well. I think all of us can think back to that 1979 revolution and contemplate how much better Iran would have been had it not went off onto a path of becoming a rogue state.

As this legislation details, today the regime flagrantly disregards commitments it has made to respect the fundamental rights of the Iranian people. Many of us recall the barbaric mass executions carried out over a 4-month period in 1988. And I dare say, if you know any Persians, if you know people who escaped from Iran, you know that, during that period of time leading up to 1988, there were over 30,000 students and young professionals who lost their lives as a consequence.

We know that the political prisoners there went through a grueling experience, in Evin Prison and other prisons. Many were executed by hanging, many by firing squad. They refused to renounce their political affiliations, and that was the fate that was handed out to them.

And today the regime still persecutes ethnic and religious minority groups; such as, the Baha'i; Christians, of course; Sufi; Sunni; dissenting Shia Muslims. And we all remember the way the ayatollah brutally suppressed the peaceful political dissent during the Green Revolution, during which the previous administration remained embarrassingly silent, in my view. And many of us here on this floor today spoke up often at that time about that dissent during the Green Revolution, because I think this was a real opportunity missed by the United States.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman MCCAUL and I want to thank Ranking Member ENGEL for their leadership on this legislation. I am glad we have strong bipartisan support for this measure. Regardless of how one views the Iran nuclear agreement, it is critical that the United States and our allies continue to press Iran for its dangerous and threatening acts that fall outside of the JCPOA.

This is an area where officials from both the Trump and Obama administrations agree, and they agree for good reason here. Remember, this is the same regime that is holding American citizens, including one who is in very poor health, on sham charges in one of the largest ransom schemes, from my standpoint, that was ever devised.

This regime, of course, held its first American hostages in 1979, when it overran our U.S. Embassy. The regime's MO remains the same. It is far past time the regime faced consequences for its attacks on Iranians and Americans alike.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, April 13, 2018.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing with respect to H.R. 4744, the "Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act," on which Ways and Means was granted an additional referral.

As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions in H.R. 4744 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means, I agree to waive formal consideration of this bill so that it may move expeditiously to the floor. The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the

Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 4744.

Sincerely,
KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, April 13, 2018.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 4744 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,
EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, April 16, 2018.

Hon. ED ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing concerning H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act.

As a result of your having consulted with the Committee on Financial Services concerning provisions in the bill that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction, I agree to forgo action on the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor. The Committee on Financial Services takes this action with our mutual understanding that, by foregoing consideration of H.R. 4744, at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction. Our Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for any such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 4744 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration thereof.

Sincerely,
JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, April 17, 2018.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HENSARLING: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from

further consideration of H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this resolution or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 4744 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,
EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, April 17, 2018.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I write with respect to H.R. 4744, the "Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act." As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions within H.R. 4744 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I forego any further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 4744 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation and that our committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 4744 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill.

Sincerely,
BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, April 17, 2018.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 4744 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this measure. Let me start by thanking Congressmen DEUTCH and MCCAUL, both valued members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for their hard work on this bill. I want to also thank Chairman ED ROYCE, who has been a strong bipartisan voice in things that are so important to our country and to the world. We always say that we take pride in having the Committee on Foreign Affairs being the most bipartisan committee in the entire Congress.

Iran has isolated itself on the global stage because it refuses to abandon a range of aggressive activities that pose a threat to the region and a threat to the entire international community. On that list is the regime's terrible mistreatment of its own people and its heinous practice of prolonged and politically motivated detentions of American citizens.

The bill before us now seeks to put an end to these intolerable practices. It would place sanctions on anyone responsible for politically motivated harassment, abuse, extortion, extended detention, or trial of Americans or Iranians.

Earlier this year, we stood on this floor in solidarity with protestors in Iran who sought a better future for their country and for the next generation. They wanted to see their government abandon its support for Iranian proxy forces and terrorist groups, like Hezbollah, in favor of funding healthcare and employment opportunities for average Iranians.

This is a country that has suffered so much under the ayatollahs and the economic mismanagement of its leaders. The protests in December and January were a stark reminder of the regime's tight grip on power, as many protesters were killed in the streets and blocked from communicating with the outside world.

Today, as we pass this legislation, we think about the Americans who currently sit in Iranian prisons. We think about Robert Levinson, Mr. DEUTCH's constituent, who has been missing for over 11 years, who has missed the weddings of his children and the births of his grandchildren.

□ 1630

The Iranian regime had promised to cooperate with the investigation to locate Mr. Levinson, but to this date, that cooperation has been virtually nonexistent.

There is no real clarity in U.S. policy toward Iran. The United States faces a

looming deadline on the nuclear deal, and the future remains uncertain. But there is one thing we can all agree on: we cannot let up the pressure on Iran for its human rights violations, particularly against American citizens.

So, again, I want to thank Mr. MCCAUL and Mr. DEUTCH for doing a great job with this. This is a bipartisan piece of legislation. If you care about the injustices going on in Iran, then it is important to support this bill.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL), chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security and the author of this bill.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support for my bill to hold the Iranian regime accountable for its continued human rights violations.

I introduced the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act with Congressman DEUTCH, and I am grateful for Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL's support in this effort.

The Iranian regime continues to perpetrate gross human rights abuses against its own people. They continue to suppress and censor their people's calls for democratic reform. They recklessly use their nation's resources to expand their destabilizing influence and support of terrorism. They continue to engage in corrupt practices, and they continue to illegally detain and imprison our citizens without just cause. This is simply unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, this bill serves as a clear signal to the people of Iran that we support their quest for freedom. It shines a light on the regime's human rights violations and targets Iranian officials guilty of corruption, censorship, and the diversion of goods intended for the Iranian people. It requires the President to work with our international partners to develop a strategy to end this inhumane behavior and sanctions those officials complicit in those crimes. Finally, it sanctions those individuals who take Americans hostage.

Mr. Speaker, today, there are more than six American citizens and permanent U.S. residents held by the Iranian regime in a shameful attempt to use innocent human lives as political bargaining chips. These hostages include: Bob Levinson, Congressman DEUTCH's constituent, who has been missing since 2007 and remains America's longest held hostage; Siamak Namazi and his 81-year-old father, Baquer, held since 2015 and 2016, respectively; Ph.D. student, Xiyue Wang, held since 2017; internet freedom activist, Nizar Zakka, held since 2016; and others.

The United States has a moral responsibility to devote resources to these hostages and make their return a priority. I sent a letter with Congressman LIEU and 46 other Members of Congress requesting that the administra-

tion keep Congress informed as to what steps they are taking to guarantee this happens.

So, again, I thank the chairman and ranking member, Congressman DEUTCH, for their leadership on this bipartisan effort to hold Iran accountable.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the letter dated April 23, 2018.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, April 23, 2018.

Hon. JOHN J. SULLIVAN,
Acting Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC.

DEAR ACTING SECRETARY SULLIVAN: We write to request information regarding the Administration's efforts to secure the release of American citizens and permanent U.S. residents held hostage by the government of Iran.

As you know, Iran has a long history of unjustly holding hostages in violation of international law dating back to 1979. Over the years, the Iranian regime has arrested dozens of foreigners on spurious charges and convicted them in sham trials held in secretive courts. Many of the detained American citizens and permanent residents are also held in deplorable conditions, where they experience severe health and psychological issues.

Today, there are more than six American citizens and permanent U.S. residents held by the Iranian regime in a shameful attempt to use innocent human lives as political bargaining chips. These hostages include Bob Levinson, who has been missing since 2007 and remains America's longest-held hostage; Siamak Namazi and his 81-year-old father Baquer, held since 2015 and 2016, respectively; PhD student Xiyue Wang, held since 2016; internet freedom activist Nizar Zakka, held since 2016; and others. The United States has a moral responsibility to devote resources to these hostages and make their return a priority.

This past month, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, to increase U.S. leverage by levying new sanctions on those responsible for detaining U.S. citizens or legal permanent respondents in Iran. But more sticks must be complemented with a coordinated diplomatic effort with our allies.

According to media reports, the State Department has increased efforts in recent months to secure the release of these hostages, including outreach to the Iranian regime in December 2017 that has gone unanswered. On April 6, 2018, the Department outlined efforts that have been undertaken in a report to Congress pursuant to Section 110 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. We request that the Department provide some additional details to Congress. Specifically, please provide answers to the following questions in either written responses or a briefing:

1. How has Iran responded to the various lines of effort made by the U.S., as detailed in the April 6 report to Congress, to raise the detention cases?
2. According to a June 20, 2017, article from the Washington Post, two senior officials from the Trump administration stated a range of options were being considered, which included "sticks more than carrots." What specific tools are being considered to secure the release of detained Americans and permanent U.S. residents?
3. Does the Administration require any new authorities from Congress to utilize these tools?
4. What is the Administration's strategy for disincentivizing and deterring foreign

governments, particularly Iran, from taking Americans and permanent U.S. residents hostage in the future?

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ted W. Lieu, Member of Congress; Michael McCaul, Member of Congress; Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Member of Congress; Ted Deutch, Member of Congress; James P. McGovern, Member of Congress; Brian Fitzpatrick, Member of Congress; Donald M. Payne, Jr., Member of Congress; Randy Hultgren, Member of Congress; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Member of Congress; Jerrold Nadler, Member of Congress; Steve Cohen, Member of Congress; Bobby L. Rush, Member of Congress; David N. Cicilline, Member of Congress; Nita M. Lowey, Member of Congress; José E. Serrano, Member of Congress.

Daniel W. Lipinski, Member of Congress; Joe Wilson, Member of Congress; Peter King, Member of Congress; Francis Rooney, Member of Congress; Mark Meadows, Member of Congress; Adriano Espaillat, Member of Congress; Brad Sherman, Member of Congress; Eleanor Holmes Norton, Member of Congress; Lee Zeldin, Member of Congress; Steve Chabot, Member of Congress; Paul Cook, Member of Congress; Eliot Engel, Member of Congress; Ted Poe, Member of Congress; Bradley S. Schneider, Member of Congress; Grace Meng, Member of Congress.

Tom Suozzi, Member of Congress; Pete Sessions, Member of Congress; Albio Sires, Member of Congress; Frank Pallone, Jr., Member of Congress; Thomas A. Garrett, Jr., Member of Congress; John Ratcliffe, Member of Congress; Josh Gottheimer, Member of Congress; Lois Frankel, Member of Congress; Derek Kilmer, Member of Congress; Patrick Meehan, Member of Congress; Leonard Lance, Member of Congress; Randy Weber, Member of Congress; Bill Johnson, Member of Congress; David P. Joyce, Member of Congress; Adam Kinzinger, Member of Congress; Elise Stefanik, Member of Congress.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member ENGEL and Chairman ROYCE for their support of this legislation, and I give special thanks to my colleague, Chairman MCCAUL, for his leadership in recognizing the need to take action.

We must work together to stop the brutal Iranian regime's human rights abuses and demand the release of American hostages that Iran is using as pawns for political leverage. I am proud to partner with Mr. MCCAUL in this effort.

The Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act sends a clear message to the Iranian regime and to the rest of the world: this Congress, this country will not tolerate the flagrant disregard of the most basic of human rights.

My colleagues have explained the merits of this bill, and I know it is difficult for many Americans to imagine, but we are here today to show our resolve in the face of really unbelievable circumstances.

For my constituents, the family of Robert Levinson, this is a nightmare that they have lived for 11 years. Bob

Levinson is the longest held American hostage in history. He disappeared in Iran on March 9, 2007.

Imagine 11 years without your husband or your father.

Imagine having grandchildren who have never had the chance to meet their grandfather.

Imagine 11 anniversaries, dozens of family birthdays, and holidays that pass by without Bob, just an empty place where Bob should be sitting.

Bob's wife, Christine, and his seven children—Susan, Stephanie, Sarah, Dan, David, Samantha, and Doug—have been tireless advocates for their father. They have traveled to Iran themselves looking for answers. They have made the trip to Washington, D.C., countless times to meet with government officials and Members of Congress.

They have fought for action all the way to the Oval Office, directly appealing to President Bush, President Obama, and President Trump. They have watched as others have returned home to their families. They have listened with hope as Iran's leaders have promised cooperation. They have been disappointed more times than they can count as promises go unfulfilled year after year after year.

Iran has become adept at this cruel game, because that is what it is to this rogue Iranian regime. They say that hostages are not hostages, but these people are not detained under a legal order. They have lost their freedom; they have been separated from their families; and they have been held under shamelessly trumped-up and false charges. Any attempt to show due process or trials has been a sham.

To the Levinsons, to the Namazi family, the Zakka family, the Wang family, and the other families whose loved ones are being held, we stand with you. Today, we speak clearly and loudly with one bipartisan voice to send a message that no country, no rogue regime will use American lives as leverage to further a dangerous agenda.

This bill isn't about the nuclear deal. Nothing in this deal precludes our continued participation in the JCPOA. But this bill makes clear the importance of closely coordinating with our allies and partners whose citizens have also been held hostage by Iran to apply pressure on the regime.

If we are going to counter Iran's abuses, Iran's terrorism, Iran's threats to our troops and our national security interests, we must work in tandem with our partners around the globe. We will stand together against repression and the violation of human rights. We will stand together against religious persecution. We will stand together for the rule of law and democratic values.

Taking hostages and violating the most fundamental values that cut to the core of our dignity as human beings is unacceptable to this Congress and to members of the international community. I urge all of my colleagues to stand up to Iran's rogue regime, to

stand up for human rights and for the people of Iran, to stand with the Levinsons and the other families whose loved ones are missing from their lives, and to fight for their return home by supporting this bill.

Please support H.R. 4744, and together we will stand for basic human rights.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), who chairs the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE for his kindness and his leadership, and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, my favorite mensch, for bringing this bill to the floor today. I also want to thank and congratulate MICHAEL MCCAUL and my south Florida colleague and dear friend TED DEUTCH for their work in offering this important bill.

The regime in Iran, as we have heard from my colleagues, is responsible for some of the most despicable human rights abuses imaginable. The regime is also notorious for its hostage-taking tactics, hoping to get financial or political concessions from the United States and other Western countries for their hostage taking.

Mr. DEUTCH and I have been highlighting these abuses in our subcommittee through multiple hearings and many pieces of legislation, including a resolution that the House passed last year, H. Res. 317, that urged the President to make the release of Americans held hostage in Iran the highest of priorities.

We also held a hearing on some of the hostages named in the resolution where we heard from family members of Mr. DEUTCH's constituent Bob Levinson, who is America's longest held hostage ever; Baquer and Siamak Namazi, father and son, who have been unjustly detained in Iran for far too long; Nizar Zakka. All of these families have had to endure so much, Mr. Speaker.

Almost 1 year later after our resolution, all of these men as well as at least four other Americans, additional Americans, continue to be unjustly detained in Iran, suffering under horrific conditions with little to no contact with their families.

Iran must be held accountable, Mr. Speaker. We need to be applying maximum pressure against the regime. This bill gives the administration more tools to sanction the regime for this practice of taking hostages, and I offer my full support.

I thank the esteemed chairman of our committee, as well as my friend, the ranking member. I thank the chairman for the time.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Iranian regime is the number one state sponsor of terror in the whole world, and they commit terrorist acts even against their own people.

I am proud to support H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, introduced by my friend, Chairman MCCAUL.

The mullahs in Tehran are among the world's worst human rights abusers. This year, we have witnessed their brutality again on display as they continue to mercilessly crush dissent from their own people.

International attention has faded, but the Iranian people are still in the streets demanding their rights, whether they be economic opportunity, access to water, religious freedom, or gender equality. In response, the regime has murdered dozens and locked up thousands, as it has done so many times before, without punishment from the outside world.

This is nothing new for the Islamic Republic. Look no further than the 1988 massacre, where 30,000 of Iran's political prisoners were systematically murdered by the regime.

This barbaric mass execution occurred by public hangings, firing squads, and included teenagers and pregnant women who refused to announce their political affiliations, including many from the MEK, today's leading Iranian dissident group.

So horrific was the act that deputy to Iran's ruler at the time, Ayatollah Khomeini, called it: "The greatest crime committed during the Islamic Republic for which history will condemn us." And, yes, history now condemns the regime for these acts of murder.

This bill will provide for that condemnation and call for investigation into this crime against humanity. It also urges our government to work with international partners and investigate other major human rights abuses, such as the dozens more killed during protests in 1999, 2009, and 2017, and sanction those responsible.

In all cases, the families of those murdered by the regime were never told what happened to their loved ones' remains. This important bill will pressure the Iranian Government to disclose the final resting place of the missing so their families may have a small bit of peace.

Mr. Speaker, now is the day of reckoning for the Iranian regime.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the United States and Iran's leaders are at odds on a host of issues. Iran has killed Americans in Iraq. Its proxies seek to harm our citizens and our interests around the world. But let me be clear: the United States has no quarrel with the Iranian people.

□ 1645

This legislation seeks to protect the human rights of the Iranian people and

Americans who are unfairly detained in Iran. This bill signals our solidarity with the protestors and demonstrators to Iran's rulers that any action that violates the human rights of an American will be met with severe consequences.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) just mentioned the 1988 massacre that was horrendous, and there were many, many more. This brutal regime has blood on its hands, and it is important for the United States to call them out.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, I would again like to thank my colleagues, Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member ENGEL, for their bipartisan leadership to hold Iran accountable, to hold them accountable for their brutality: their brutality in the 1988 massacres, and their brutality in terms of the way they are treating their religious minorities today.

We know that Americans formerly imprisoned by Iran describe being subjected to electric shock and whippings. We have heard that before our committee. We have heard them say that they were denied medical care.

Today, U.S. citizens, such as Siamak and Baqer Namazi, Xiyue Wang, and U.S. permanent resident Nazar Zaka, are all sitting in Iranian jails on bogus accusations of collaborating with a hostile government for espionage. And U.S. citizen Robert Levinson is still missing, and that is more than 10 years after he disappeared in Iran. Our hearts go out to these victims and our hearts go out to their families as we renew our call for the immediate release of all U.S. citizens and permanent residents held in Iran.

With this legislation, we will impose tough sanctions on the regime. And we do that for its corruption, for its attacks on innocent Americans, and for its attacks on Iranians alike.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support for H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, introduced by my fellow Texas delegate Congressman Michael McCall and fellow House Judiciary colleague Congressman Ted Deutch.

H.R. 4744 states that Congress stands with the people of Iran, and it provides the Trump administration with the tools necessary to hold Iranian government officials responsible for human rights violations, corruption, and censorship.

Moreover, this legislation holds the Iranian regime accountable for taking hostage American citizens and permanent residents by ensuring that those responsible pay an extreme but just price for the violations committed.

I applaud the House Foreign Affairs Committee for their support in passing this critical piece of legislation.

And I sincerely hope that this bill passes the Senate and arrives at the President's desk to

be promptly signed into law so we can begin to hold the Iranian regime accountable for their gross human rights violations.

The Iranian regime continues to perpetuate gross human rights abuses against its own people.

The regime continues to suppress the country's voices for reform through censorship of the media.

The regime continues to recklessly use the nation's resources to expand its regional influence through its support for terrorist groups.

The regime continues to engage in corrupt practices.

And the regime continues to illegally detain and imprison our citizens without just cause or reason.

These practices are unacceptable.

H.R. 4744 serves as a clear signal to the people of Iran that we support them in their quest for freedom, it shines a light on the regime's human rights violations and sanctions those who are complicit in such crimes.

The same goes for Iranian officials guilty of corruption, censorship, and the diversion of goods intended for the Iranian people.

Lastly, this bill sanctions individuals complicit in taking Americans and other nation's citizens hostage and requires the President to work with our international partners to develop a strategy to put an end to this practice.

We have five Americans currently detained in Iran—an intolerable circumstance that calls for action.

We must do all we can, and apply as much pressure on Iran as necessary to ensure the American detainees' safe release, and prevent future Americans from being held hostage by this brutal regime.

I thank Congressman MCCAUL and DEUTCH for their leadership on this legislation to hold Iran's corrupt officials accountable.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill's passage, and the passage of all the important measure before us today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4744, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NO ASSISTANCE FOR ASSAD ACT

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4681) to limit assistance for areas of Syria controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4681

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,