

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H. RES. 458
OFFERED BY MR. DEUTCH OF FLORIDA

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas relations between the United States and Tunisia began in 1795, and the 2 countries have partnered in trade and security since the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship, signed at Tunis, August 28, 1797;

Whereas the United States was the first major power to recognize a sovereign Tunisia, following its independence from France in 1956;

Whereas the people of the United States and of Tunisia share core values, such as respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law;

Whereas, on January 14, 2011, the peaceful mass protests of the Jasmine Revolution successfully brought to an end the authoritarian rule of President Ben Ali;

Whereas, in the aftermath of Ben Ali's resignation, Tunisians—

(1) initiated a peaceful, consensus-based, and inclusive transition to democracy;

(2) held the first competitive, multi-party democratic elections of the 2011 Arab Spring;

(3) adopted a new constitution in 2014; and

(4) held new elections under that constitution later that year;

Whereas, on December 31, 2014, after winning a free and fair presidential election, Beji Caid Essebsi was inaugurated as the first freely elected President of Tunisia;

Whereas, on October 9, 2015, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, a coalition of 4 civil society organizations, the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize for the coalition's work—

(1) building on the promise of the 2011 Jasmine Revolution; and

(2) ensuring that the transition of Tunisia into a democracy did not descend into violence or renewed authoritarianism;

Whereas Tunisia has been the only North African country to achieve a “Free” rating by the Freedom House's annual Freedom in the World report, and has maintained a “Free” rating since 2015;

Whereas the political evolution of Tunisia stands as an inspiration for citizens of other states aspiring to establish the institutions of democracy after a history of autocratic rule;

Whereas Tunisia suffered significant terrorist attacks in 2015, 2016, and 2018;

Whereas, on June 27, 2019, two suicide bombers attacked Tunisian security forces;

Whereas, in the aftermath of these attacks, citizens and leaders of Tunisia have reaffirmed their commitment to dialogue, pluralism, and democracy;

Whereas a significant number of Tunisian fighters for extremist groups, including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), reportedly returned to Tunisia, many clandestinely, between 2011 and 2018;

Whereas Tunisia continues to face serious threats to its security from violent extremist groups operating within the country as well as in neighboring countries;

Whereas, in July 2015, President Obama designated Tunisia as a major non-NATO ally;

Whereas Tunisia has committed approximately 15 percent of its budget to defense and interior ministries for counterterrorism in recent years, at the expense of economic and social development;

Whereas Tunisia faces economic challenges, including high inflation and high unemployment, especially among young Tunisians;

Whereas the United States Government is committed to continuing a strong economic partnership with Tunisia as its government undertakes reforms to transform its economy to meet the aspirations of all of the citizens of Tunisia;

Whereas it is in the interest of the United States, and consistent with the values of the United States, to support the aspirations of the people of Tunisia in developing a pluralist democracy and transparent, effective institutions;

Whereas, on February 27, 2020, Tunisia named a new coalition government under the head of government, Elyas Fakhfakh;

Whereas, in accordance with the United States-Tunisia strategic partnership, both countries are dedicated to working together to promote—

(1) economic development and business opportunities in Tunisia;

(2) education for the advancement of long-term development in Tunisia; and

(3) increased security cooperation to address common threats in Tunisia and across the region; and

Whereas the United States Government should prioritize funding to support Tunisia's transition into a democratic, stable, and prosperous nation: Now, therefore, be it

Strike all after the resolved text and insert the following:

1 That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the people of Tunisia and their
3 commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and free
4 and fair elections;

5 (2) acknowledges the political leaders of Tunisia
6 for their willingness to compromise and work to-
7 gether in the national interest;

8 (3) condemns all acts of terrorism, and extends
9 condolences to the families of victims of terrorism
10 and to the people and Government of Tunisia;

11 (4) recognizes the people and Government of
12 Tunisia for their resilience in the face of terrorist at-
13 tacks and their enduring commitment to a free,
14 democratic, and peaceful Republic of Tunisia;

15 (5) encourages President Saied, Head of Gov-
16 ernment Fakhfakh, and the Parliament of Tunisia
17 to work together to accelerate economic reforms and
18 anti-corruption measures;

1 (6) calls on the Government of Tunisia—

2 (A) to fully implement the Tunisian Con-
3 stitution of 2014, including the protection of
4 civil liberties and the establishment of new in-
5 stitutions, such as the Constitutional Court;

6 (B) to continue its commitment to demo-
7 cratic accountability and transitional justice, in-
8 cluding with regard to corruption;

9 (C) to continue decentralizing political
10 power to local governments, which is a key step
11 toward more accountable governance and a
12 means to address long-standing issues of dra-
13 matic regional disparity in health care, edu-
14 cation, poverty, and infrastructure;

15 (D) to work with the United States and
16 other partners to expand its plan to identify,
17 prosecute, deradicalize, or reintegrate into soci-
18 ety Tunisian fighters returned from abroad;
19 and

20 (E) work with other democracies around
21 the world to promote tolerance and freedom;

22 (7) calls on the United States Government to
23 prioritize assistance to Tunisia to—

24 (A) support democracy and civil society;

1 (B) strengthen and reform the security
2 sector;

3 (C) reduce corruption, implement economic
4 reforms, promote trade and investment, and
5 maintain important and meaningful labor pro-
6 tections; and

7 (D) support increased border security by
8 enhancing Tunisia's capabilities to detect, iden-
9 tify, and interdict illicit trafficking of weapons
10 through intensive training and equipment dona-
11 tion;

12 (8) calls on the neighbors and partners of Tuni-
13 sia to work cooperatively with the Government of
14 Tunisia to counter terrorist threats, secure borders,
15 and support the democratic transition of Tunisia;

16 (9) reaffirms the national interest of the United
17 States in continued democracy in Tunisia, including
18 the protection of—

19 (A) the rule of law;

20 (B) independent media;

21 (C) a vibrant civil society; and

22 (D) fundamental human rights for all citi-
23 zens, including freedom of speech;

1 (10) affirms the national interest of the United
2 States in Tunisia's economic prosperity and develop-
3 ment;

4 (11) reaffirms the commitment of the United
5 States Government to Tunisia, including a commit-
6 ment to prioritize assistance, in support of the ongo-
7 ing transition of Tunisia to an inclusive, prosperous,
8 and secure democracy;

9 (12) recognizes important partnerships, includ-
10 ing—

11 (A) the U.S.-Tunisia Strategic Dialogue;

12 (B) the U.S.-Tunisia Joint Military Com-
13 mission;

14 (C) the U.S.-Tunisia Joint Economic Com-
15 mission;

16 (D) the Tunisian American Enterprise
17 Fund; and

18 (E) international educational exchange
19 programs, including the Fulbright Program and
20 the Thomas Jefferson Scholars Program;

21 (13) urges increased United States engagement
22 and cooperation with the people and Government of
23 Tunisia, including—

24 (A) Tunisia's democratic institutions;

25 (B) civil society;

1 (C) schools and universities;

2 (D) independent media; and

3 (E) the private sector; and

4 (14) reaffirms the historic and continuing
5 friendship between the people of the United States
6 and the people of Tunisia.

