

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5321

To urge the Government of Ethiopia to hold orderly, peaceful, and free and fair national elections in May 2005 and to authorize United States assistance for elections-related activities to monitor the Ethiopian national elections.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 8, 2004

Mr. HONDA (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. ROYCE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

A BILL

To urge the Government of Ethiopia to hold orderly, peaceful, and free and fair national elections in May 2005 and to authorize United States assistance for elections-related activities to monitor the Ethiopian national elections.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Free and Fair Elec-
5 tions in Ethiopia Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) Relations between the United States and
2 Ethiopia have improved significantly over the past
3 decade, although human rights concerns in Ethiopia
4 remain. The Government of the Federal Democratic
5 Republic of Ethiopia has cooperated with the United
6 States on a range of efforts, including combating
7 global terrorism.

8 (2) In 1995 and 2000, the Government of Ethi-
9 opia organized and conducted local, regional, and
10 national elections. In 1995, some opposition parties
11 boycotted the elections, despite offers and support by
12 donor governments, including the United States, to
13 help ensure free and fair elections. Opposition par-
14 ties, including those outside of Ethiopia, have a re-
15 sponsibility and duty to play a constructive role in
16 building democracy in Ethiopia and to engage the
17 Government of Ethiopia in peaceful dialogue.

18 (3) The Department of State, in its most recent
19 country reports on human rights practices, deter-
20 mined that “the 2000 national elections and the
21 2001 regional elections [in Ethiopia] were generally
22 free and fair in most areas but were marred by seri-
23 ous irregularities, including killings, disappearances,
24 voter intimidation and harassment, and unlawful de-

1 tentions of opposition party supporters, particularly
2 in the southern region.

3 (4) The Government of Ethiopia demonstrated
4 its commitment to holding democratic elections in
5 the 2000 parliamentary elections because of its will-
6 ingness to re-run parliamentary elections in 14 con-
7 stituencies in which elections irregularities were re-
8 ported.

9 (5) It is critical that the Government of Ethi-
10 opia, donor countries, and civil society offer an ex-
11 tensive and comprehensive civic education in order
12 to prepare and educate the people of Ethiopia about
13 their democratic rights and duties.

14 (6) The Government of Ethiopia should ensure
15 the safety and security of opposition party officials
16 and prosecute and punish those local and regional
17 officials engaged in harassment and intimidation of
18 opposition party officials.

19 (7) Mass media, including radio and television,
20 remain under the control of the Government of Ethi-
21 opia. The decision of the Government of Ethiopia to
22 issue radio broadcast licenses to private entre-
23 preneurs is encouraging. Independent and private
24 press, especially radio and television, are key to de-
25 mocracy and transparency. The decision by the Gov-

1 ernment of Ethiopia to engage the opposition in a
2 constructive dialogue to resolve issues related to the
3 upcoming elections, including access to the media by
4 the opposition and reform of the electoral board,
5 should be commended.

6 (8) The decision by the Government of Ethiopia
7 to allow international elections observers contributes
8 to a more free and fair elections process and should
9 be commended.

10 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

11 It is the sense of Congress that—

12 (1) the Government of the Federal Democratic
13 Republic of Ethiopia should hold orderly, peaceful,
14 and free and fair national elections in May 2005 in
15 order to ensure the long-term growth and stability of
16 the country;

17 (2) it is critical that the elections are deemed
18 by the people of Ethiopia as free and fair and pro-
19 vide the winner of the election a clear mandate to
20 govern the country; and

21 (3) the Government of Ethiopia and opposition
22 parties should continue their constructive dialog to-
23 ward resolving elections-related issues.

1 **SEC. 4. ASSISTANCE TO MONITOR THE 2005 NATIONAL**
2 **ELECTIONS IN ETHIOPIA.**

3 The President, acting through the Administrator of
4 the United States Agency for International Development,
5 is authorized to provide assistance on a grant basis to non-
6 governmental organizations for elections-related activities
7 in order to monitor the May 2005 national elections in
8 the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and assess
9 whether or not these elections are held on a free and fair
10 basis.

11 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
13 priated to the President to carry out this Act \$10,000,000
14 for fiscal year 2005.

15 (b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant
16 to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a)
17 are authorized to remain available until expended.

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