

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1497

Condemning the inclusion of inflammatory and inaccurate content in Iranian textbooks that is aimed at indoctrinating and radicalizing students with anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic, and anti-Western sentiment and at restricting the rights of women.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 30, 2010

Mr. ROSKAM (for himself and Mr. QUIGLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Condemning the inclusion of inflammatory and inaccurate content in Iranian textbooks that is aimed at indoctrinating and radicalizing students with anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic, and anti-Western sentiment and at restricting the rights of women.

Whereas an Iranian law passed in 1987 states, “the education system plays a role in shaping students politically and ensuring their adherence to the Islamic Revolution” and that “purification takes precedence over education.”;

Whereas in 2005, after being elected President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reintroduced the institution of “omur-e parvareshi” whereby special “mentors” from the Basij militia, the volunteer force that has played a role in suppressing opposition ideas and protests, ensure that

students do not deviate from a narrow track of political thought, Islamic values, and life outside school;

Whereas a 2007 United States Government-sponsored contract study of 85 Iranian school textbooks of all grades again found numerous examples of anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli sentiment being taught to Iranian schoolchildren, such as a Grade 5 literature book that states that “the Israeli enemies . . . occupied the Dome of Rock and they do not let the Muslims pray in it . . . the Israeli enemies destroyed the school of Palestinians”;

Whereas the same study also found textbooks advocating martyrdom, such as a Grade 5 social teachings textbook that states that “martyrdom is the highest degree of sacrifice” and another Grade 5 Persian language and literature textbook that praises martyrdom and urges children to welcome it;

Whereas the same study also found textbooks advocating against women’s rights, such as a high school textbook that states that “giving the right to vote to women was a clear act of hostility to Islam”;

Whereas a comprehensive 2008 Freedom House study of 95 Iranian school textbooks published between 2006 and 2007 for all grades concluded that “the government of Iran is teaching the country’s children to discriminate against women and minorities, to view non-Muslims with suspicion if not contempt, and to perpetuate the regime’s theocratic ideology. Discrimination and intolerance are deeply ingrained in the textbooks that make up the core of Iran’s school curriculum”;

Whereas the same study also found that textbooks consider Israel to be an “absolute evil” and connect many of Iran’s political issues and crises to Israel;

Whereas the same study concluded that “the discourse of the textbooks has not been written with the concept of equality of all human beings, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”;

Whereas in 2007, discussion began to rewrite the Iranian school system’s textbooks to make content more Islamic, segregate between men and women, eliminate subjects deemed too Western or secular, and to eliminate parts of Iran’s own history that could foment nationalist or anti-Islamic sentiment;

Whereas Iranian women have been able to attend school and advance themselves in spite of restrictions placed upon them, accounting for six out of ten university students, which has produced a generation of educated women who can fight for reform and for more rights;

Whereas a discussion is underway in Iran to reform the university system because it currently puts women at a further disadvantage by implementing quotas to limit enrollment and segregating classes;

Whereas members of groups organized to protest the educational system have routinely been arrested;

Whereas the practice of gozinesh, which screens students accepted to public universities for moral behavior and loyalty to Islam and the regime and which had been banned in 1997, was reinstituted by President Ahmadinejad;

Whereas a Wall Street Journal article dated December 31, 2009, that chronicles the star system in the Iranian school system and the adversity faced by so-called “star

students” in Iran states that “ranking in the top of the class . . . means your name appears on a list of students considered a threat by the intelligence ministry . . . [and] a partial or complete ban from education”;

Whereas students with one star are allowed to return to school only after signing a consent to give up political activism, students with two stars face suspensions and interrogations, and students with three stars are banned from education for life;

Whereas star students are identified by monitoring email and phone conversations of people considered dissidents and activists;

Whereas the same article reported a female student who ranked 55th out of more than 70,000 students on the nation’s law school entrance exam, but was not allowed to attend law school because of her “star” status, had participated in the presidential campaign of opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi and in several protests that occurred after the disputed election;

Whereas the same article reported a male student who ranked 43rd out of 25,000 participants in an MBA placement exam was denied admission, suspended for four semesters, arrested, and put in solitary confinement for 21 days due to his role as spokesperson for a politically active student group and as editor of a political student publication;

Whereas there are many historical examples of education being used as a weapon of indoctrination and a method to instill hatred toward a group of people, including Nazi Germany; and

Whereas Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to education. . . . Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) condemns the inclusion of inflammatory and
3 inaccurate content in Iranian textbooks that is
4 aimed at indoctrinating and radicalizing students
5 with anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic, and anti-Western sen-
6 timent and at restricting the rights of women;

7 (2) calls on the Government of Iran to reform
8 its textbooks and educational system so that it may
9 promote peace, tolerance, equality, civil debate, and
10 the development of civil society; and

11 (3) urges the President regarding the conduct
12 of Iran to take into consideration the harmful and
13 disturbing content propagated by the Iranian edu-
14 cation system.

○