

a colossal challenge. With dedication, commitment to hard work, and inspirational leadership, Greece met the challenge while proudly showcasing the ideals of the Olympics and promoting friendship and peace among nations.

As the host to the biggest sporting event in the world, Athens rose magnificently to the challenge and demonstrated the pride and honor that comes with such an occasion. The leadership shown by the government of Greece, and more specifically, the Prime Minister of Greece, Costas Karamanlis, inspired Athens to a great celebration of commitment, dedication, and human endeavor. The mayor of Athens, Dora Bakoyianni, was responsible for presenting the Olympics not only as a modern sporting occasion, but also as an ancient tradition with superb new modern facilities surrounded by historic and architectural wonder.

The Olympic Games left behind not only a memory of great athletic competition, but a legacy of peace, nobility, and honor that should be at the forefront of all international occasions. The Athens Olympic Organizing Committee, under the direction of Gianna Dasklaki-Angelopoulou, presented such a colossal event which surpassed all expectations. She and her staff succeeded in showcasing all that Athens has to offer, old and new, as the birthplace of the Olympics and a frontrunner in modern development. With Athens being the birthplace of the modern Olympics games and containing so many beautiful ancient monuments, there could not have been a more perfect setting for a truly wonderful celebration of athleticism.

The citizens and government of Greece put on a show that made Hellenes from around the world proud. As a Greek-American, I am most proud. I commend Greece for ensuring that the 2004 Summer Olympic Games would not be forgotten. I encourage my colleagues to support H. Res. 774.

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

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 774.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING OPPRESSION BY CHINA OF FALUN GONG IN UNITED STATES AND CHINA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 304) expressing the sense of Congress regarding oppression by the Government of the People's Republic of China of Falun Gong in the United States and in China.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 304

Whereas Falun Gong is a peaceful spiritual movement that originated in the People's Republic of China but has grown in popularity worldwide and is now accepted and practiced by thousands in the United States;

Whereas demonstrations by Falun Gong practitioners in the People's Republic of China and the United States have been peaceful, meditative sessions;

Whereas the Constitution of the People's Republic of China provides to the citizens of that country freedom of speech, assembly, association, and religious belief;

Whereas members of the Falun Gong spiritual movement, members of Chinese pro-democracy groups, and advocates of human rights reform in the People's Republic of China have been harassed, libeled, imprisoned, and beaten for demonstrating peacefully inside that country;

Whereas the Chinese Government has also attempted to silence the Falun Gong movement and Chinese prodemocracy groups inside the United States;

Whereas on June 12, 2003, 38 Members of Congress filed an Amended Brief of Amicus Curiae in support of the Falun Gong at the United States District Court, Northeastern District of Illinois, Eastern Division;

Whereas Chinese consular officials have pressured local elected officials in the United States to refuse or withdraw support for the Falun Gong spiritual group;

Whereas Dr. Charles Lee, a United States citizen, has reportedly been mentally and physically tortured since being detained by Chinese authorities in early 2003;

Whereas the apartment of Ms. Gail Rachlin, the Falun Gong spokeswoman in the United States, has been broken into 5 times by agents of the Chinese regime since the regime banned Falun Gong in 1999 in China;

Whereas over the past 5 years China's diplomatic corps has been actively involved in harassing and persecuting Falun Gong practitioners in the United States;

Whereas on June 23, 2003, Falun Gong practitioners were attacked outside a Chinese restaurant in New York City by local United States-based individuals with reported ties to the Chinese Government;

Whereas 5 Falun Gong practitioners were assaulted outside of the Chinese Consulate in Chicago on September 7, 2001, while exercising their constitutionally protected rights to free speech, leading to battery convictions in Cook County Criminal Court of Jiming Zheng on November 13, 2002, and Yujun Weng on December 5, 2002, both assailants being members of a Chinese-American organization in Chicago, the Mid-USA Fujian Township Association, which maintains close ties with the Chinese Consulate;

Whereas individuals that physically harassed Falun Gong practitioners in San Francisco on October 22, 2000, were later seen at anti-Falun Gong meetings and the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco;

Whereas San Francisco City Supervisor Chris Daly, after receiving complaints that Chinese officials were intimidating his constituents, authored a resolution condemning human rights violations and persecution of Falun Gong members by the Chinese Government;

Whereas Mr. Daly and the other members of the San Francisco City Council subsequently received a letter from the Chinese Consul General in San Francisco, claiming that Falun Gong was an "evil cult" that was undermining the "normal social order" in the People's Republic of China, and that Mr. Daly's resolution should therefore be rejected, which it subsequently was;

Whereas in November 2000, the former Mayor of Saratoga, California, Stan

Bogosian, issued a proclamation honoring the contributions of Falun Gong practitioners to the Saratoga community, which prompted the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco to write to Mr. Bogosian urging him to retract his support for local Falun Gong activities;

Whereas many local and national media organizations have reported that other local officials across the United States, including the mayors of several major cities, have been pressured by Chinese consular officials to recant statements of support for the Falun Gong;

Whereas journalists have cited fear of hurting trade relationships as the motivation for some local United States officials to recant their support for Falun Gong after receiving pressure from Chinese consular officials; and

Whereas the Constitution of the United States guarantees freedom of religion, the right to assemble, and the right to speak freely, and the people of the United States strongly value protecting the ability of all people to live without fear and in accordance with their personal beliefs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Government of the People's Republic of China should—

(A) immediately stop interfering in the exercise of religious and political freedoms within the United States, such as the right to practice Falun Gong, that are guaranteed by the United States Constitution;

(B) cease using the diplomatic missions in the United States to spread falsehoods about the nature of Falun Gong;

(C) release from detention all prisoners of conscience, including practitioners of Falun Gong, who have been incarcerated in violation of their rights as expressed in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China;

(D) immediately end the harassment, detention, physical abuse, and imprisonment of individuals who are exercising their legitimate rights to freedom of religion, including the practices of Falun Gong, freedom of expression, and freedom of association as stated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China; and

(E) demonstrate its willingness to abide by international standards of freedom of belief, expression, and association by ceasing to restrict those freedoms in the People's Republic of China;

(2) the President should, in accordance with section 401(a)(1)(B) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401(a)(1)(B)), and with the intention of dissuading the Chinese Government from attempting to stifle religious freedom in the People's Republic of China and the United States, take action such as—

(A) issuing an official public demarche, a formal protest, to the Chinese Foreign Ministry in response to the repeated violations by the Chinese Government of basic human rights protected in international covenants to which the People's Republic of China is a signatory; and

(B) working more closely with Chinese human rights activists to identify Chinese authorities who have been personally responsible for acts of violence and persecution in the People's Republic of China;

(3) the Attorney General should investigate reports that Chinese consular officials in the United States have committed illegal acts while attempting to intimidate or inappropriately influence Falun Gong practitioners or local elected officials, and, in consultation with the Secretary of State, determine an appropriate legal response; and

(4) officials of local governments in the United States should—

(A) in accordance with local statutes and procedures, recognize and support organizations and individuals that share the goals of all or part of the local community, including Falun Gong practitioners; and

(B) report incidents of pressure or harassment by agents of the People's Republic of China to Members of Congress, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of State.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 304, the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to commend my colleagues, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), for their dedication and support of this resolution. I would also like to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE), as well as the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), our ranking member, and our entire leadership for bringing this resolution to the floor today.

I rise today to call attention to the horrific specter of the repression imposed upon a peaceful spiritual movement, the Falun Gong, by the largest authoritarian regime in the world today, the Communist regime in China.

On July 22, 1999, a date which will live in the annals of human rights violations as a day of infamy, the Beijing authorities declared the Falun Gong illegal, branding it a so-called "evil cult." This immediately prompted mass arrests, torture and reported deaths of Falun Gong practitioners in official custody, which continues unabated to this present day.

These Falun Gong practitioners still in Chinese custody include at least one American citizen, Dr. Charles Lee. Members of Congress have repeatedly called for his immediate release, and we renew that call here today.

This chamber has repeatedly condemned the Chinese regime's abhorrent violations of human rights and the violations of freedom of belief and conscience of the Falun Gong. We have done so by rendering our overwhelming support to bipartisan resolutions that I have introduced with my colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), and numerous others.

However, H. Con. Res. 304 is different. This resolution before us today is ad-

ressing something even more ominous. With over 70 cosponsors, this resolution focuses on reports and investigations on the use of fear, intimidation and oppression, often connected with violence, right here within the borders of our own country, within the United States.

Falun Gong practitioners, while peacefully and nonviolently exercising their constitutional rights to free speech and assembly, have been intimidated from California to New York by agents of the Chinese regime. They have, as we have outlined in this resolution, been physically harassed on the streets of San Francisco, assaulted on the streets of Chicago outside of the Chinese consulate and attacked on the streets of New York by individuals with reported ties to the Chinese regime.

Let those listening to this debate, including representatives of any foreign governments having strategies for suppressing free speech in this country, remember one thing: This is the United States of America, the cradle of freedom and democracy. We will not sit idly by as you infringe upon the rights of our citizens and residents who practice Falun Gong. Any interference in the exercise of free speech inside our land will result in the expulsion of those who engage in such actions.

In the land of the free, all voices will be heard. In the home of the brave, a hundred or more flowers will bloom, including the Falun Gong's spiritual movement.

I ask my colleagues to send a clear message to the Chinese regime and to immediately and unconditionally stop its deplorable treatment of the Falun Gong spiritual movement, both inside China and specifically here in the United States.

I ask for a "yes" vote on H. Con. Res. 304.

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

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

I strongly support this resolution. It is a very important resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do so as well.

Mr. Speaker, 5 years ago, the Chinese government launched a very brutal crackdown of the Falun Gong spiritual movement throughout China. Tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners were brutally beaten, thrown in jail and tortured.

□ 2000

Over 800 Falun Gong practitioners have been killed and tens of thousands remain locked up in Chinese prisons, in psychiatric institutions, and reformed through labor camps. The ongoing Chinese suppression of the Falun Gong is one of the greatest human rights abuses of our time and will, undoubtedly, be marked as one of the darkest periods in modern Chinese history.

Congress has repeatedly spoken out against the repression of Falun Gong practitioners in China. The resolution

before us today, however, focuses the spotlight on a new element of the Chinese Government's anti-Falun Gong campaign, the attempt to quash any support for Falun Gong in the United States.

Over the past 5 years, Chinese diplomats in the United States have engaged in a campaign of intimidation and pressure against Falun Gong practitioners here in the United States and those who advocate on their behalf. Apparently not satisfied with the brutal suppression of Falun Gong adherence in China, China has decided to export these repressive policies to the United States.

As the resolution notes, local officials in the United States have been pressured to vote against resolutions condemning the persecution of Falun Gong. Practitioners of Falun Gong in the United States have also been harassed and physically assaulted by individuals associated with Chinese diplomatic missions. Media organizations attempting to fairly cover the treatment of Falun Gong have been pressured by Chinese officials, particularly if their papers ran editorials critical of the Chinese Government.

Mr. Speaker, the Chinese Government's heavy-handed tactics against Falun Gong in the United States will backfire. As Americans see firsthand the extremes to which the Chinese Government will go to stop Falun Gong, sympathy for the plight of Falun Gong practitioners everywhere is sure to grow. Mr. Speaker, this resolution puts the Congress firmly on record against such pressure tactics, and I strongly support its passage.

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

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), whose leadership on this issue is to be commended and who has worked in a bipartisan fashion with the gentlewoman from Florida to bring this resolution to the floor.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 304, a resolution that condemns the harassment of Falun Gong practitioners in China and here in the United States. I first want to thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), with whom I coauthored and introduced this important resolution in October of last year. I also want to thank the House leadership for allowing this important legislation to come to the House floor, and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for yielding me this time.

Finally, I want to thank the loyal and dedicated Falun Gong practitioners who have diligently stopped by my offices over the last 2 years. It has been my pleasure to work with them on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, in April of 1999, 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners staged a peaceful demonstration in front of the Communist Party headquarters near Tiananmen Square. They protested China's oppressive regime. Of course,

we are all familiar with the events that took place in Tiananmen Square in 1989, when thousands of individuals protesting the Chinese regime were brutally beaten and many killed, but China's abuses of Falun Gong practitioners both in China and here in the United States have not received the same attention.

China's rulers have condemned Falun Gong since the 1999 protest, calling this peaceful spiritual movement an evil cult, and embarking on an official campaign to eradicate the movement. China has imprisoned, tortured, and even murdered hundreds of people simply because they peacefully practice Falun Gong. Included among those who have been jailed and tortured are American citizens of Chinese descent.

Charles Lee, a California native, is one such victim. In the year 2003, he traveled to China to visit his extended family. Immediately upon stepping off the airplane, Charles Lee was arrested by Chinese officials. Despite the United States State Department appeals for his release, he has been jailed and tortured in a Chinese prison since his abduction.

Other American Falun Gong practitioners have been assaulted, robbed, and harassed right here in America. Miss Gail Rachlin, the Falun Gong spokeswoman in the United States, has had her New York apartment broken into not once, not twice, but five times over in the last 5 years; and it appears the break-ins have been by Chinese agents.

China's diplomats to the United States too have been actively involved in harassing and persecuting Falun Gong practitioners here in the United States. When San Francisco City Supervisor Chris Daly heard some of his constituents had been harassed by Chinese officials, he authored a resolution for the San Francisco Board condemning the persecution of Falun Gong members by the Chinese Government. In response, the Chinese Consul General in San Francisco sent Mr. Daly a harshly worded letter, claiming that Falun Gong undermines the normal social order in China and should be condemned.

The same experience has been repeated time and time again in dozens of cities across the country. A local official introduces a resolution in support of Falun Gong, and in response the Chinese consulate in the U.S. condemns that resolution as well as the local official who sponsored it.

Mr. Speaker, that is why H. Con. Res. 304 expresses the sense of Congress that the Government of the People's Republic of China immediately stop interfering in the exercise of religious and political freedoms within the United States, including the right to practice Falun Gong. This resolution also states that China immediately cease its harassment, detention, and torture of any individual exercising his or her legitimate rights to freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and freedom of

association, as affirmed by the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

The right to practice the religion or spiritual movement of one's choice is ingrained in the very fabric of the United States Constitution. That is why it is counter to what we stand for in our country that Chinese officials have persecuted Falun Gong practitioners and harassed local American officials right here in our country.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important resolution. Send a strong message to China that we demand the proper treatment of both Americans and Chinese individuals who practice the Falun Gong spiritual movement.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge passage of H. Con. Res. 304, expressing the sense of Congress that the Government of the People's Republic of China should cease its persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in the United States and in China. Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, I commend you for introducing this legislation and for speaking out against human rights abuses throughout the world.

Members of Congress need to be aware of the brutal suppression of human rights and religious freedoms being carried out by the People's Republic of China. From forced abortion and labor camps, to the imprisonment and sometimes even execution of brave Chinese who dare to stand up for their faith or political beliefs, Hu Jintao's regime, like that of Jiang Zemin before, is one of the worst violators of human rights in the world.

While Christians, Tibetan Buddhists, and Muslim Uighurs are all being persecuted for the faith, the suffering of peaceful Falun Gong practitioners has been especially intense. In 1999, China's dictators launched a brutal campaign to completely eradicate Falun Gong from their country through whatever means necessary, claiming that Falun Gong was a threat to "social order" in China. The reason behind this campaign of brutality is clear: by the mid to late 1990s, the number of Falun Gong practitioners began to exceed the number of members of the Communist Party. Like all dictators and totalitarian terror systems, the PRC fears and hates what it cannot control. So it sought to destroy and intimidate those who practice Falun Gong. I would also note that the regime has labeled as "cults" and is now oppressing other groups with followings comparable to that of the Falun Gong, such as the Xiang Gong, Guo Gong, and Zhong Gong qigong groups.

Falun Gong is not a religion, per se, but rather more like a philosophy. Based on the principles of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance, Falun Gong uses a series of five physical and mental exercises to assist its members to purify themselves spiritually and peacefully resolve conflicts. Whatever one may say about the merits of their beliefs, the evidence is very clear that Falun Gong practitioners are peaceful individuals who want to be left alone to practice their beliefs as they see fit.

To carry out the task of smashing those who practice Falun Gong, the Beijing dictatorship created "610" offices throughout China to oversee and direct the persecution of Falun Gong through brainwashing, torture, and murder.

The State Department Human Rights Report for 2003 has several pages documenting the plight of the Falun Gong. We know at least 250 Falun Gong members have died as a result of torture thus far. For instance, in only a three-month period from June to August last year, more than 50 Falun Gong died in custody, many from torture in detention camps. Other estimates place the total body count higher. Bodies of the tortured victims are often cremated immediately to conceal evidence of torture. The report indicated that Falun Gong adherents sent to mental health institutions have been administered psychiatric drugs and electric shock treatments by Chinese authorities.

Several thousand Falun Gong practitioners—estimated at 125,000 or higher—are held in labor camps, prisons, and mental hospitals, where they are forced to endure torture brainwashing sessions. For example, in December 2003, Liu Chengjun, sentenced to 19 years in prison in March 2002 for involvement in illegal Falun Gong television broadcasts, was reportedly beaten to death by police in Jilin City Prison.

The government continues to find new ways to crack down on Falun Gong. Over the past year, the Government initiated a comprehensive effort to round up practitioners not already in custody and sanctioned the use of high-pressure tactics and mandatory anti-Falun Gong study sessions to force practitioners to renounce Falun Gong. Even practitioners who had not protested or made other public demonstrations of belief reportedly were forced to attend anti-Falun Gong classes or were sent directly to reeducation-through-labor camps, where in some cases, beatings and torture reportedly were used to force them to recant. These tactics reportedly resulted in large number of practitioners signing pledges to renounce the movement.

At the National People's Congress session in March, Premier Wen Jiabao's Government Work Report emphasized that the Government would "expand and deepen its battle against cults," including Falun Gong. Thousands of individuals were still undergoing criminal, administrative, and extrajudicial punishment for engaging in Falun Gong practices, admitting that they adhered to the teachings of Falun Gong, or refusing to criticize the organization or its founder.

During April to June 2003, the Government launched fresh accusations that Falun Gong practitioners were disrupting SARS-prevention efforts. State-run media claimed that, beginning in April, Falun Gong followers "incited public panic" and otherwise "sabotaged" anti-SARS efforts in many provinces by preaching that belief in Falun Gong will prevent persons from contracting SARS. Authorities detained hundreds of Falun Gong adherents on such charges, including 69 in Jiangsu Province during May and 180 in Hebei Province during June.

But Beijing is not confining its disgusting torture and brainwashing campaign to its own people. Chinese-American citizens and permanent residents are also victims. One American citizen, Dr. Charles Li, was arrested January 22, 2003 in China upon his arrival at an airport. A Falun Gong practitioner, the Chinese government alleges he attempted to sabotage television and radio equipment, even though he had just arrived in the country. Dr. Li has gone on continual hunger strikes to protest his

arrest but been subject to forced feedings. There are reports that he is being subjected to brainwashing and anti-Falun Gong propaganda. At least 37 other Falun Gong practitioners who have family members that are residing in the U.S. are also in prison in China. Authorities also detained foreign Falun Gong practitioners from other countries. For example, in January 2003, two Australian citizens were deported for engaging in Falun Gong activities in Sichuan Province.

As my colleagues know, a sizeable number of Falun Gong practitioners reside here in the United States. They attempt to raise awareness about the horrors their fellow believers are subject to through meeting with government officials and through holding peaceful protests. Just this past August, Falun Gong members gathered on the Mall to pass out literature and inform Americans of the great suffering those in their faith are enduring. When Hu Jintao and other state leaders responsible for this purge are visiting foreign countries, Falun Gong members travel overseas to protest and raise awareness of the brutal persecution.

In response, China's persecution against the Falun Gong has moved outside of China's own borders. Large numbers of Falun Gong in the United States have reported to have been harassed. The FBI is currently investigating beatings of Falun Gong practitioners in Atlanta and Chicago. On June 23, 2003, Falun Gong practitioners in New York were harassed and physically violated by Chinese nationals associated with the consulate. Charges have been filed with the authorities. Li Li and some of her friends were involved with this incident.

Persecution of Falun Gong in China is horrific enough itself. The fact that China is now exporting its repression to weaker foreign nations under the guise of "safety" and "public order" is even worse. The cancer of China's repression is spreading all over the world. The PRC is not content to beat and torture and silence those inside its own borders. Now it is seeking to bully other nations into doing its bidding. When will this country wake up and stand up to this kind of nonsense?

I call upon all members of this body to support H. Con. Res. 304. I call on the administration to step up its efforts to speak up for the Falun Gong and out against the actions of the Chinese government immediately.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. State Department's 2004 International Religious Freedom report for China begins as follows: "During the period covered by this report, the Government's respect for freedom of religion and freedom of conscience remained poor, especially for many unregistered religious groups and spiritual movements such as the Falun Gong."

According to the report, the arrest, detention, and imprisonment of Falun Gong practitioners continued, and practitioners who refuse to recant their beliefs are sometimes subjected to harsh treatment in prisons and reeducation-through-labor camps and there have been credible reports of deaths due to torture and abuse.

Foreign observers estimate that half of the 250,000 officially recorded inmates in the country's reeducation-through-labor camps are Falun Gong adherents.

Falun Gong blends aspects of Taoism, Buddhism, and the meditation techniques and physical exercises of qigong (a traditional Chi-

nese exercise discipline) with the teachings of Falun Gong leader Li Hongzhi. Despite its spiritual content, Falun Gong does not consider itself a religion and has no clergy or places of worship.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution calls upon the government of China to immediately end the harassment, detention, physical abuse, and imprisonment of individuals who are exercising their legitimate rights to freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and freedom of association as stated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

The importance of this cannot be overstated—the protection of religious freedom is intimately connected to the protection of other fundamental human and civil rights, as well as to the growth of democracy.

A government that acknowledges and protects freedom of religion and conscience is one that understands the inherent and inviolable dignity of the human person, and is more likely to protect, the other rights fundamental to human dignity, such as freedom from arbitrary arrest or seizure, or freedom from torture and murder.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution sends an important message to the government of China that we will not look the other way when they violate the basic rights of their people, and that we demand of our partners in the international community the protection of the most basic human rights—freedom to worship freely.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my support for H. Con. Res. 304, a resolution honoring the tradition and practice of Falun Gong. As a cosponsor of this resolution, I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this important piece of legislation.

H. Con. Res. 304 calls on the Chinese Government to stop interfering with the religious and political rights of individuals in the United States to practice Falun Gong. The Chinese Government has gone so far as to spread falsehoods about Falun Gong and to harass, detain, abuse and imprison Falun Gong practitioners. The practitioners are simply exercising their legitimate right to freedom of religion and expression, and the actions of the Chinese Government conflict with international standards of freedom and human rights and must end immediately.

I have an admiration for the practitioners and adherents of Falun Gong and I am invested in the movement both in the United States and abroad. I remain committed to the task of making Falun Gong safe to practice in any country in the world. The members of Falun Gong are opposed by a Chinese government that unjustly views them as dissenters. This view is entirely without merit. In reality, Falun Gong is an inherently peaceful, apolitical movement that stresses nonviolence and meditation. Since Falun Gong was outlawed in 1999, hundreds of nonviolent practitioners have been arrested, tortured, libeled, and detained without charge or proof of any wrongdoing.

Sadly, the unwarranted and unprovoked aggression against Falun Gong has not ceased, nor is it limited to China. There have been unprovoked attacks in the United States and Falun Gong members have been subjected to a humiliating and denigrating blacklist.

One incident that I found particularly offensive took place in June 2003. Falun Gong members were attacked and beaten while holding a nonviolent protest in New York City.

In an effort to end the discrimination that confronts Falun Gong practitioners, I wrote a letter to the Manhattan District Attorney, Robert Morgenthau, requesting an investigation of this case. I hope that justice prevails in this case.

With passage of H. Con. Res. 304, we can send a strong signal condemning China's human rights abuses and we can take one step closer to ensuring Falun Gong members the freedom of religion and assembly guaranteed to them by law.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 304.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES OF CARIBBEAN DEVASTATED BY HURRICANES CHARLEY, FRANCES, IVAN, AND JEANNE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 496) expressing the sense of Congress with regard to providing humanitarian assistance to countries of the Caribbean devastated by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 496

Whereas in May 2004, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) predicted that 2004 would be an above-normal Atlantic hurricane season;

Whereas from August to September 2004 Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne devastated countries of the Caribbean and the southern, midwestern, and eastern regions of the United States;

Whereas the people of the United States, who have encountered the harsh consequences of the recent hurricanes, can empathize with the countries of the Caribbean as they begin the recovery process;

Whereas Hurricane Frances displaced 800 people and destroyed 80 homes in the Bahamas;

Whereas Hurricane Frances caused an estimated \$125,000,000 in damage to the islands of the Bahamas;

Whereas four hurricanes have struck the region within five weeks;

Whereas 90 percent of homes in Grenada sustained significant damage as a result of Hurricane Ivan;

Whereas the International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that 60,000 of the 95,000 inhabitants of Grenada were made homeless as a result of the devastation;

Whereas Hurricane Ivan is the worst natural disaster to hit Jamaica in 50 years;

Whereas an estimated 13,000 Jamaicans were displaced during Hurricane Ivan;