

his eight years in office. Though most Colombians wanted him to remain in power, he bowed to a Supreme Court ruling against a referendum on a third term—which means that unlike Mr. Chávez, he will leave behind a strong democratic system.

Colombia has nevertheless been treated more as an enemy than friend by congressional Democrats, who have steadily reduced U.S. military aid and worked assiduously to block the free-trade agreement Mr. Uribe negotiated with the Bush administration. The Obama administration, which has courted Mr. Lula and sought to improve relations with Venezuela and Cuba, has been cool to Colombia, recommending another 11 percent reduction in aid for next year and keeping the trade agreement on ice.

Mr. Santos's election offers an opportunity to revitalize the relationship. As defense minister, he demonstrated a commitment to addressing the human rights concerns that troubled some in Congress. He has pledged to seek better relations with both Venezuela and Ecuador, despite the material support those countries have provided to the FARC.

Ratification of the free-trade agreement would serve the administration's stated goal of boosting U.S. exports while bolstering a nation that could be an anchor for democracy and political moderation in the region. It would also allow the administration and Congress to demonstrate that friends of the United States will be supported and not scorned in Washington.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today as the proud author of the resolution before us, House Resolution 1465, which reaffirms the longstanding friendship and the deep alliance between the United States and Colombia.

□ 1350

Furthermore, it recognizes our shared commitment to democracy, and it congratulates Juan Manuel Santos as President-elect of Colombia.

In Colombia, we have seen the impossible become possible. Once under siege by extremist groups and drug cartels, the people of Colombia and its government have transformed a dark past into a promising bright future. The recent Presidential elections in Colombia are a testament to this progress and demonstrate the confidence that the people of Colombia have in President-elect Santos. Receiving 69 percent of the vote, President-elect Santos has a clear mandate to continue much of the progress seen under President Uribe.

Following his victory on Sunday, President-elect Santos said, "Colombia is leaving its nightmare. The FARC's time has run out. No more useless confrontations, no more divisions. The time has arrived for union. The time has arrived for work, employment and entrepreneurialism."

Juan Manuel Santos' professed commitment to the values of freedom and demonstrated ability to stand up to extremists stands in stark contrast to the tyrannical and destabilizing agendas of dictators in the region. Further, the free and fair nature of the multiparty, internationally recognized Presidential election in Colombia serves as an important reminder to

some in the region of what a real and genuine democratic electoral process really looks like.

With elections scheduled soon in Venezuela and Nicaragua, we have already seen both Hugo Chavez and Daniel Ortega pulling out all the stops to question their opposition. From the media to the courts, Chavez and Ortega have no shame in their abject dismissal of the democratic processes in their countries. However, as critical as it is to call out those who affront the principles of a democratic society, it is equally important to recognize those who embrace them, which is why we are here today, Madam Speaker, standing in support of House Resolution 1465.

Colombia represents to many the light at the end of the tunnel. Colombia shows that, with hard work, determination and a commitment to fundamental freedoms, a democracy can flourish no matter what the odds. Instead of falling into a deep division, Colombia is ascending the peak of freedom and democracy. I have no doubt that the vital alliance between our country and Colombia is poised to become ever closer and more successful than ever under the leadership of President-elect Santos, and I remain ever hopeful that this alliance will soon include the passage of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

Colombia has enormous potential for U.S. businesses, especially in my home State of Florida. Miami had nearly \$6 billion in total trade with Colombia last year alone. Signed nearly 4 years ago, the FTA is one of the easiest, most obvious steps that Congress can take to expand these important economic ties.

We can ask for no better partner or trusted ally than the people of Colombia. Its commitment to the democratic process, as demonstrated by this weekend's free, fair, and transparent election, shows what can be accomplished when the basic tenets of liberty are afforded to the people of a nation.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate President-elect Santos on this momentous occasion, and once again, I would like to recognize the unbreakable ties between the people of the United States and Colombia.

I am so pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas—they only come that way in Texas—Judge POE, an esteemed member of our Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding some time.

Madam Speaker, this is an important resolution. It puts the United States on record as to where we stand in our part of the world when it comes to democracy and in supporting our allies. Colombia is an ally of the United States.

When I was in Colombia in April, down in the jungle with the narcotics police—with General Patino—helping and watching how they fight the cartels and FARC, I learned from the Co-

lombians that they like Americans, not just their government but the people of Colombia. Yet that is not universally true in South America. There are a lot of folks who don't care much for the United States, but the Colombian people are our allies, not only politically, but also, they like Americans for who we are. They support us, and we should support them.

It was a good day for democracy when President Santos was elected this past weekend. We should show Colombia and the rest of the world that we support this democracy in South America. We should also support the Colombian-American Free Trade Agreement. This is an important agreement to show that we mean business in supporting another democracy. Rather than talking about trading with the Chinese, we ought to talk about trading with democracies. This is one of those democracies, and it is being stalled for political reasons.

We need to support this. We need to pass it through this House and to make sure that the Colombians know that we mean, in word and deed, that they are our ally, especially our ally in free trade. So I commend this resolution. We must make sure that we support democracy anywhere it occurs in the world, and we must support freedom as well. Let's move a step forward, and let's move forward with the free trade agreement with our friends, our allies, and our neighbors in Colombia.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend from Texas.

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

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1465.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CALLING FOR RELEASE OF ISRAELI SOLDIER BY HAMAS

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1359) calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit held captive by Hamas, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1359

Whereas Congress previously expressed its concern for missing Israeli soldiers in Public Law 106-89 (113 Stat. 1305; November 8, 1999), which required the Secretary of State to raise the status of missing Israeli soldiers

with appropriate government officials of Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority, and other governments in the region, and to submit to Congress reports on those efforts and any subsequent discovery of relevant information;

Whereas the House of Representatives passed H. Res. 107 on March 13, 2007, regarding Gilad Shalit and other Israeli soldiers attacked and captured by terrorists;

Whereas Israel completed its withdrawal from Gaza on September 12, 2005;

Whereas on June 25, 2006, contrary to international humanitarian standards and the most basic standards of humanitarian conduct, the Foreign Terrorist Organization Hamas, together with allied terrorists, crossed into Israel to attack a military post, killing two soldiers and wounding and kidnapping a third, Gilad Shalit, in a blatantly extortionate effort to coerce the Government of Israel;

Whereas Hamas, contrary to international humanitarian standards and the most basic standards of humanitarian conduct, has prevented access to Gilad Shalit by competent medical personnel and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross;

Whereas Hamas, contrary to international humanitarian standards and the most basic standards of humanitarian conduct, has failed to provide Gilad Shalit the humane treatment to which all captives are entitled as a fundamental human right;

Whereas Hamas, contrary to international humanitarian standards and the most basic standards of humanitarian conduct, has refused to provide Gilad Shalit with regular contact with his family or any other party, or to allow his family to know where he is being held;

Whereas Hamas, contrary to international humanitarian standards and the most basic standards of humanitarian conduct, has compelled Gilad Shalit to appear in video and voice recordings intended to extort and coerce the Government of Israel;

Whereas Hamas, contrary to the most basic standards of humanitarian conduct, has staged plays and produced cartoons and animated movies that have mocked Shalit, his captivity, and his family, and have promised further kidnappings of Israeli soldiers; and

Whereas Gilad Shalit has been held in captivity by Hamas for almost 4 years: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) demands that—

(A) Hamas immediately and unconditionally release Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit; and

(B) Hamas accede to international humanitarian standards and the most basic standards of humanitarian conduct by—

(i) allowing prompt access to Gilad Shalit by competent medical personnel and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross;

(ii) providing Gilad Shalit the humane treatment all captives are entitled to as a fundamental human right;

(iii) facilitating regular communication by Gilad Shalit with his family and allowing his family to know where he is being held; and

(iv) ceasing to compel Gilad Shalit to appear in video and voice recordings intended to extort and coerce the Government of Israel;

(2) expresses—

(A) its vigorous support and unwavering commitment to the welfare, security, and survival of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state within recognized and secure borders;

(B) its strong support and deep interest in achieving a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the creation of a

democratic, viable, and independent Palestinian state living in peace alongside of the State of Israel;

(C) its ongoing concern and sympathy for the family of Gilad Shalit and the families of all other missing Israeli soldiers; and

(D) its full commitment to continue to seek the immediate and unconditional release of Gilad Shalit and other missing Israeli soldiers;

(3) recalls—

(A) the barbaric attack on and kidnapping of the bodies of Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regav on July 12, 2006, by the Iran-supported terrorist group Hezbollah; and

(B) the missing Israeli soldiers Zecharya Baumel, Zvi Feldman, and Yehuda Katz, missing since June 11, 1982, Ron Arad, who was captured on October 16, 1986, Guy Hever, last seen on August 17, 1997, and Majdy Halabi, last seen on May 24, 2005; and

(4) condemns—

(A) Hamas for the grossly immoral cross-border attack and kidnapping of Gilad Shalit; and

(B) Iran and Syria, the primary state sponsors and patrons of Hamas, for their ongoing support for international terrorism.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSELEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank my good friend, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, for his support for this resolution and for its consideration by the House today.

Madam Speaker, Gilad Shalit is not an American. He is an Israeli soldier who has been held captive by Hamas for 4 years.

□ 1400

His parents are not Americans. I don't know that he's ever even been to the United States. But I would contend that, nonetheless, he's one of us. Why? Most simply, because he is a soldier serving in the army of a fellow democracy, a long-standing ally that is fighting a war of survival against an Iranian-backed radical Islamist terror organization explicitly committed to the destruction of the Jewish State and the annihilation of all Jews in Israel.

Some may doubt that such shocking, vicious bigotry is really possible in the year 2010. It's not merely possible, and it's not an overstatement. It's reality. On June 11, not even 2 weeks ago, Hamas authorities in Gaza broadcast the following ceremony—and this is a quote directly from that sermon: “Whoever believes that our battle with the Jews and the crusaders has subsided or is dormant is living in delusions. The Jews are convinced that their annihilation and the destruction of their State will never be accomplished by secular, reactionary, Pan-Arabic, or Baathist regimes. Their annihilation and the destruction of their State will only be achieved through Islam.” It goes on. But that was the basis of the Hamas sermon. That's the Hamas world view. And they're not

ashamed of it. We shouldn't hesitate to believe them when they say they hate Jews and they're trying to destroy Israel and they want to create an Islamic theocracy in Palestine. Just look at what they've done in Gaza.

For those who believe in universal human rights and religious rights and freedom, Hamas is your enemy. If you believe in peace and two states for two peoples, these are your foes. If you believe kidnapping and extortion are inexcusable and detonating a bomb full of nails and ball bearings inside a city bus or restaurant is barbaric, these are your adversaries. If you believe that firing rockets at homes and kindergartens filled with young kids is absolutely indefensible, and that teaching hate to children is monstrous, these are your opponents. If you support the Palestinian Authority and President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayad are Palestinian's best chance of statehood, Hamas is the opposition. If you support a democratic Jewish State of Israel and want to see Prime Minister Netanyahu take chances for peace, Hamas is the enemy desperate to ensure that he never will. If you want the United States to be active in helping Israelis and Palestinians to make peace, Hamas are the people working against our every effort.

Gilad Shalit is just one soldier, but his captivity tells you everything you need to know about Hamas. As the resolution makes clear, contrary to both international humanitarian law and the most basic standards of human conduct, Hamas has prevented all access to Gilad Shalit by competent medical personnel and the representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross. They've done this time and time again. And, Madam Speaker, they've just done it again today. They've denied him the humane treatment to which any captive is entitled; they've barred any communication by him with his family; and they've compelled him to appear on propaganda videos. Each of these unconscionable choices demonstrates the amoral and depraved character of Hamas.

These allegedly religious militants are nothing but thugs. Nothing more. They hold up all kinds of banners, and they champion all kinds of causes, and they claim all kinds of mandates. But their real goal is power and their true intention is a disruption of the State of Israel.

Against their enterprise of darkness and hatred and bloodshed, we need to stand up with both Palestinians and Israelis for a different vision and a different future—one where Israelis and Palestinians live side by side in peace; where the City of Jerusalem is a city of coexistence and tolerance; where the lost and the missing—all of them—all of them—are returned to their families and their people. It is this vision that motivates us, that mobilizes us to work so hard to achieve peace for others. And it is within this vision of a better future that we keep faith with

our allies in the State of Israel and with the Shalit family as they wait for the return of their lost son.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Since its creation over 6 decades ago, our ally Israel has been under siege from those who seek its destruction. Israel's enemies, refusing to accept the existence of the Jewish State, have invaded Israel's borders and sought to wipe it off the map. They have launched missiles at Israeli civilians. They have sent homicide bombers to massacre innocent Israelis on buses, in schools, in synagogues, in restaurants, in hotels. They have desecrated wedding celebrations and Passover seders with acts of mass murder, turning days of joy into days of mourning. And they have killed or kidnapped Israeli soldiers.

These bloody acts were taken not to build a better life for the future of the Palestinians, but to wipe out any future for the Israelis and to destroy the Jewish State. Of course, at present, the greatest threats to Israel's security and its very existence are posed by the rogue regimes of Iran and Syria, as well as by their violent extremist proxies, such as Hamas and Hezbollah. This is the context for this important resolution before us today.

On June 25, 2006, as part of its long-standing war against the Jewish State, Hamas crossed into Israel and attacked an Israeli military post, killing two soldiers and kidnapping Gilad Shalit, who was then just 19 years old. For the last 4 years, Hamas has held Staff Sergeant Shalit hostage, denying him access to his family, access by competent medical personnel, as well as representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Hamas has forced young Shalit to appear in audio recordings and video recordings used to put pressure on Israel, and has mocked Shalit, mocked his family and his captivity in plays and cartoons and animated movies. Reports indicate that Shalit's health has declined as the result of his captivity.

Madam Speaker, Hamas, its fellow violent extremist group, Hezbollah, and their state sponsors not only are at war with Israel; they seek the destruction of the United States as well. Ahmadinejad has spoken of "a world without America or Zionism," stating that "you should know that this slogan, this goal, can certainly be achieved." And the Iranian regime is no stranger to taking hostages, including the 52 American hostages that Tehran held captive for 444 days. So when we consider Hamas's holding of Gilad Shalit in captivity, we must recognize this situation is part of the broader threat posed to both the United States and to Israel.

Madam Speaker, I have met with Staff Sergeant Shalit's father, who gave me his son's dog tags. And as a parent, I can only imagine the agony

that the Shalit family is enduring. Indeed, anguish over Gilad Shalit's plight is felt by millions of Israelis who have parents, siblings, spouses, or children who are serving in the Israeli Defense Forces and who have spent many anxious nights hoping and praying for the safe return of their loved one. It resonates directly with many of us who have had children and other family members and friends who, in the service of our Nation, have been in harm's way.

As Israel continues to seek Gilad Shalit's freedom, we in the United States must continue to stand with our indispensable ally. For all of these reasons, Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 1359, which reaffirms our demand for Gilad Shalit's immediate and unconditional release.

I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, Mr. ACKERMAN and Mr. BURTON, for introducing this resolution. I ask that the House join us in voting in favor of this resolution and in support of further measures to address the comprehensive threat posed on our Nation and to our ally Israel by Iran, by Syria, and by their militant proxies.

□ 1410

Among the steps the United States should take is to stop the failed policies of engagement with the Syrian and Iranian regimes which have not advanced our interests but has lent those dictatorships undeserved legitimacy. We should also continue to stand unequivocally with our ally Israel and oppose all efforts to deny Israel its sovereign right to self-defense—the very right that Staff Sergeant Gilad Shalit was exercising when he was kidnapped by Hamas.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I want to thank the gentlewoman from Florida, the distinguished ranking member of the committee, for her statement and for her support.

Madam Speaker, now it's my pleasure to yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Nevada, SHELLEY BERKLEY, a distinguished and respected member of our committee.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my very good and dear and cherished friend from New York for yielding and for bringing much-needed attention to this issue by introducing this resolution which I proudly cosponsored.

Madam Speaker, I rise today along with my colleagues to mark a very sad occasion: The fourth anniversary of the kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. If the world needs evidence of Hamas' cruelty, they need look no further than the kidnapping of this young soldier serving on the Israeli side of the Gaza border. Defying any standards of human decency and international law, Hamas has held him prisoner without

access to a doctor or to the Red Cross. They have denied him contact with any outside party or even his family, who have no idea where this young man is being held. Hamas has even forced him to appear in a video that was used to pressure the Israeli Government into making concessions in exchange for his release.

The conditions of his detainment are illegal, they are deplorable, and they are immoral. For some reason, though, the world bombards Israel with criticism for the simple act of defending its citizens, while Hamas continues to violate human rights day after day. It is unjust, and it ultimately puts all peace-loving people at risk. Where is the U.N. with its outrage? Where is the Arab world? Where are our European allies? The world leaps to condemn Israel whenever it is put in the untenable situation of defending itself against terrorism. Where is the outrage against the continuous inhuman behavior of Hamas, a recognized terrorist organization? Where is the outrage against Hamas as it continues to hold Gilad Shalit, a young man just doing his duty? Just this week, Israel took enormous risks by easing their necessary and legal blockade of Gaza. It is time—indeed, Madam Speaker, it is well past time—for Hamas to show some human decency and release Gilad Shalit back to his family.

I am the mother of a son named Sam who is the exact same age as Gilad Shalit. I can only imagine what that mother goes through day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year as she has absolutely no contact and no idea how her son is being treated, where he's being held, and what his condition is. Shame. The shame of it all. It's disgusting. I urge support for this resolution.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the resolution that is now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. RICHARDSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H. Res. 1359, which calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier held captive by Hamas since June 25, 2006. Today, 4 years later, Shalit remains a prisoner and Hamas has denied him medical treatment and access to his family. I agree with the resolution's sponsors that his imprisonment is not only a violation of international law and an affront to the international community, but has also impeded the peace process between Israel and Palestine.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has caused tragedy and loss of enormous proportions on both sides. I know that all of my colleagues oppose further loss of life and will support a lasting peace in this region. I am hopeful for

the day when two states—an Israeli and a Palestinian state—can peacefully exist side by side. Until that day, both sides must work towards peace and must refrain from aggressive actions. The kidnapping and ongoing inhumane treatment of Gilad Shalit has exacerbated tensions in the region, causing heartache for Sgt. Shalit's family and country, and making peace negotiations more difficult.

I stand for peace and human rights and am proud to support this resolution. I can see no justification for Sgt. Shalit's continued imprisonment and urge Hamas to release Sgt. Shalit. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting peace and human rights by supporting this important resolution.

Mr. GRAYSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. On June 25, 2006, exactly 4 years ago this Friday, Gilad was kidnapped by Hamas terrorists within Israeli territory, near the Karem Shalom crossing. This kidnapping was a part of an unprovoked and organized military operation by Hamas terrorists who continue to hold Gilad captive in Gaza.

Throughout Gilad's captivity, the International Red Cross has requested to send representatives to assess his conditions of detention and treatment, as well as to provide medical attention to Gilad. Just recently, Hamas once again refused to give the Red Cross access to check on Gilad's well being in accordance with international law. Pierre Dorbes, deputy head of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Israel and the Territories stated that, "... we have been able to visit nearly everyone detained in connection to this conflict, with the exception of Gilad Shalit."

As negotiations for his release continue, it is important to recognize the efforts of Gilad Shalit's family and friends, particularly his mother Aviva and his father Noam to secure his release. I can only imagine the heartache and frustration that they feel as they work to help secure their son's freedom.

Madam Speaker, I along with my colleagues continue to call for the unconditional release of Gilad Shalit. I urge President Obama to continue to make Gilad's release a priority for his administration as he works with all parties to resolve the ongoing conflict in the region.

Mr. MCMAHON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support H. Res. 1359, a resolution calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit held captive by Hamas.

On June 25, 2006, Hamas captured 19-year-old Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit on the southern Israeli side of the Gaza Strip. This inherent and blatant disrespect for standards of international conduct was a deliberate form of extortion meant to coerce the Israeli government to release Palestinian prisoners.

Hamas has furthered the injustice by denying Shalit access to medical care from the International Red Cross or treatment as a prisoner of war. Shalit has been explicitly denied the most basic humane treatment, and we cannot allow for this abhorrent conduct to persist.

Hamas has continually utilized terrorist cells to attack Israeli soldiers even though Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza in 2005. This callous disregard for international humanitarian law is deeply troubling.

I am unwavering in my support for the security and welfare of the democratic nation of

Israel, and the creation of a mutually acceptable two state solution. This cannot happen unless Hamas immediately and unconditionally releases Shalit and accepts the right for Israel to exist and lays down their arms for good.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me today in recognizing our dedication to the release of Shalit and the prospect of peace and democracy in the region by supporting this resolution.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support H. Res. 1359 and mark the 4-year anniversary of the capture of IDF soldier Gilad Shalit. On June 25, 2006, Shalit was taken in a cross-border raid, remains held in Gaza, and for the past 4 years, he has been denied virtually all contact with the outside world.

When he was kidnapped, he was only 19 years old, the age of an average American college student. But instead of being able to serve his country and continue with his bright future, he has been held a prisoner for 4 years.

The plight of this soldier must not be forgotten. I want to honor the sacrifice of this young man and his family who wait every day for news of their son's circumstances. I have met the Shalit family and I have seen the pain in their eyes and the pleading in their voices. The Shalit family has also met with many communities across the United States, urging people to remember their son and speak out on his behalf. Today, I join the communities in Palm Beach and Broward County in sending a message to Gilad Shalit's captors: Let Gilad Shalit go.

As Israel faces dangerous threats from throughout the region and still makes unprecedented sacrifices for peace, America stands with Israel in its hope for the release of Gilad Shalit. American families and Israeli families are united in the hope that the Shalit family should suffer no longer.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 1359, a resolution calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

I would like to thank Congressman ACKERMAN for introducing this important resolution, of which I am a cosponsor, and to commend him and Chairman BERMAN for their leadership on this critical issue.

On Friday, Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit will have spent 4 years in captivity. Since June 2006, Shalit has been held by Hamas and denied the humane treatment mandated by international law, including regular communication with his family and visits by the International Red Cross. He has been forced to appear in Hamas propaganda, intended to extort the Israeli government. Shalit was 19 years old at the time of his abduction.

Human beings should not be used as bargaining chips. Gilad Shalit must be immediately and unconditionally released, and all prisoners must be afforded the basic protections of international humanitarian law.

I am also proud to support this resolution because it expresses Congressional support for both the Jewish state of Israel, which must have recognized and secure borders, and a democratic, viable, and independent Palestinian state. I strongly believe that a negotiated, two-state solution offers Israelis and Palestinians alike the best prospect for long-term security and stability.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Gilad Shalit.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. 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 gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1359, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING ANNIVERSARY OF DISPUTED IRANIAN ELECTIONS

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1457) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives on the one-year anniversary of the Government of Iran's fraudulent manipulation of Iranian elections, the Government of Iran's continued denial of human rights and democracy to the people of Iran, and the Government of Iran's continued pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1457

Whereas Iran's authoritarian system of government violates numerous international norms and principles of democratic governance;

Whereas June 12, 2009, was the date scheduled for Iranian presidential elections, in which only candidates approved by the Government of Iran's Guardian Council were allowed to compete;

Whereas the ensuing announcement by Iranian authorities of an "overwhelming victory" for Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was made suspiciously early;

Whereas reported vote counts in the June 12, 2009, election were inconsistent with Iranian demographics and political trends, including provinces in which more votes were allegedly cast than the number of registered voters and vote counts that indicated unusual pro-Ahmadinejad voting patterns by traditionally anti-Ahmadinejad constituencies;

Whereas the Government of Iran's unrealistic vote count and fraudulent announcement of election results prompted millions of Iranians to rush into the streets in protest and prompted unprecedented public criticism by Iranians of the authoritarian rulers of the Government of Iran;