

DHS is charged with the safety of our Nation and its citizens. The OIG report indicates that not only are there some DHS personnel not being held accountable for failing to safeguard their sensitive assets, they are also not receiving proper training on how to properly safeguard and keep track of such equipment. Given the importance of DHS' mission, this is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

H.R. 4433 follows the OIG's recommendations and requires DHS' Under Secretary for Management to promulgate a departmentwide directive to DHS personnel aimed at achieving adequate security over DHS firearms and other sensitive assets. H.R. 4433 mandates that this directive include descriptions of what equipment is classified as a sensitive asset, requirements for securing Department-issued sensitive assets, and recordkeeping requirements for reporting lost or stolen firearms and other assets.

H.R. 4433 also requires DHS to update its Personal Property Asset Management Program Manual to include procedures and training on how to safeguard assets, both on and off duty, in accordance with the directive.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 4433, the Securing Department of Homeland Security Firearms Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, DHS is a diverse Department that has the distinction of being the largest law enforcement agency in the Federal Government. To help support its critical mission, DHS must maintain and safeguard a variety of sensitive law enforcement equipment, such as firearms, ammunition, and badges. DHS equipment in the wrong hands could result in loss of life.

According to an October 2017 report issued by the DHS Office of Inspector General, the Department does not have adequate requirements to safeguard its sensitive assets. Approximately 2,100 highly sensitive assets were lost between 2014 and 2016. In response to the report, my legislation requires DHS to develop and implement policies to secure firearms and other sensitive DHS equipment at the Department.

This security measure requires the Under Secretary of Management to disseminate a departmentwide directive that includes requirements for securing firearms and sensitive DHS equipment, as well as reporting these requirements.

This measure outlines the responsibilities to properly safeguard firearms and sensitive assets in accordance with the directive and requires personnel to properly report lost firearms and equipment.

This measure was unanimously approved by the Committee on Homeland Security last month and will help foster greater accountability and security within DHS, and I urge passage of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, my legislation is intended to advance the critical mission of DHS by ensuring that firearms and sensitive assets are properly safeguarded and maintained.

In my home State of California, in 2015, a 27-year-old, Antonio Ramos, was shot and killed with an ICE agent's stolen 9-millimeter weapon.

According to the DHS OIG, failures to safeguard important equipment and assets are still not being properly addressed. Given DHS' mission, it is essential that the DHS workforce prioritize and properly protect the equipment that is critical to their mission.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I, once again, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4433, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4433, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE OF IRAN TO FREE EXPRESSION

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 676) supporting the rights of the people of Iran to free expression, condemning the Iranian regime for its crackdown on legitimate protests, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 676

Whereas, on December 28, 2017, popular protests against the Iranian regime began in the city of Mashad and rapidly spread throughout the country, in the most significant anti-government protests in Iran since June 2009;

Whereas the protesters have expressed numerous economic grievances, including the regime's widespread corruption and the Revolutionary Guard Corps' control of the country's economy;

Whereas protesters have decried the regime's costly, destabilizing activities abroad, including its support for terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and the murderous Assad regime in Syria;

Whereas reports indicate that more than 1,000 Iranians have been arrested and almost two dozen killed in connection with the protests;

Whereas the Iranian regime has shut down mobile internet access and has blocked and pressured companies to cut off social media applications used by activists to organize and publicize the protests;

Whereas Congress has provided authority to license the provision of communications

technology to Iran to improve the ability of the Iranian people to speak freely;

Whereas, on January 1, 2018, regime officials threatened to crack down, with Brigadier General Esmail Kowsari of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps stating, "If this situation continues, the officials will definitely make some decisions and at that point this business will be finished.";

Whereas Congress has provided authority to designate and sanction elements of the Iranian regime involved in significant corruption and serious human rights abuses;

Whereas Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps and its Basij militia have been sanctioned by the United States for planning and carrying out serious human rights abuses against the Iranian people, including for the cruel and prolonged torture of political dissidents;

Whereas the regime has routinely violated the human rights of Iranian citizens, including ongoing, systematic, and serious restrictions of freedom of peaceful assembly and association and freedom of opinion and expression, including the continuing closures of media outlets, arrests of journalists, and the censorship of expression in online forums such as blogs and websites;

Whereas the Department of State's 2016 Human Rights Report on Iran noted "severe restrictions on civil liberties, including the freedoms of assembly, association, speech, religion, and press. Other human rights problems included abuse of due process combined with use of capital punishment for crimes that do not meet the requirements of due process, as well as cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; and disregard for the physical integrity of persons, whom authorities arbitrarily and unlawfully detained, tortured, or killed.";

Whereas, on December 29, 2017, the Department of State strongly condemned the arrest of peaceful protesters and noted that "Iran's leaders have turned a wealthy country with a rich history and culture into an economically depleted rogue state whose chief exports are violence, bloodshed, and chaos.";

Whereas, on January 1, 2018, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, stated that "The UK is watching events in Iran closely. We believe that there should be meaningful debate about the legitimate and important issues the protesters are raising and we look to the Iranian authorities to permit this.";

Whereas, on January 2, 2018, the French Foreign Ministry stated that "French authorities are closely monitoring the situation in Iran. Demonstrating freely is a fundamental right. The same is true for the free movement of information. France expresses its concern over the large number of victims and arrests.";

Whereas, on January 1, 2018, a spokesman for the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that "We call on the Iranian authorities to uphold and respect democratic and human rights" and "We are encouraged by the Iranian people who are bravely exercising their basic right to protest peacefully. Canada will continue to support the fundamental rights of the Iranians, including freedom of expression.";

Whereas Iran is a member of the United Nations, voted for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, among other international human rights treaties; and

Whereas, in violation of these and other international obligations, Iranian regime officials continue to violate the fundamental human rights of the Iranian people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) stands with the people of Iran that are engaged in legitimate and peaceful protests against an oppressive, corrupt regime;

(2) condemns the Iranian regime's serious human rights abuses against the Iranian people, significant corruption, and destabilizing activities abroad;

(3) notes the statements of support for the protestors from key allies and calls on all democratic governments and institutions to clearly support the Iranian people's right to live in a free society;

(4) demands that the Iranian regime abide by its international obligations with respect to human rights and civil liberties, including freedoms of assembly, speech, and press;

(5) urges the Administration to use targeted sanctions and work to convene emergency sessions of the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations Human Rights Council to condemn the ongoing human rights violations perpetrated by the Iranian regime and establish a mechanism by which the Security Council can monitor such violations;

(6) encourages the Administration to expedite the license of communications technology to Iran to improve the ability of the Iranian people to speak freely;

(7) calls on companies to reject requests by the regime to cut off the Iranian people from social media and other communications platforms;

(8) respects the proud history and rich culture of the Iranian nation and fully supports efforts by the people of Iran to promote the establishment of basic freedoms that build the foundation for the emergence of a freely elected, open, and democratic political system; and

(9) urges the President and the Secretary of State to work with the international community to ensure that violations of human rights are part of all formal and informal multilateral or bilateral discussions with and regarding Iran.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. 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 this measure.

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.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their swift action in putting this important and timely resolution together.

The world has been witnessing the people of Iran taking to the streets en masse to protest the radical regime in Tehran. They have made it clear that the regime's policies have done nothing but harm Iran.

We have seen large-scale protests in Iran before, most notably in 2009, but these protests are different, Mr. Speaker. This time, unlike in 2009, America has not shied away from doing the

right thing. The administration has expressed vocal support for the people of Iran, and it has warned the regime that we are watching how it responds.

The public discontent is palpable, and these protests have exposed the cracks behind the regime's veneer. For decades, the hardline regime has squandered Iran's vast resources in pursuit of spreading the revolutionary ideology and of achieving an illicit nuclear weapons program.

The regime's rule by fear and rule by intimidation—the human rights abuses, the silencing of the opposition, the abuses of ethnic and religious minorities, the restrictions imposed against women under sharia law, and the corruption, none of these are being taken anymore, sitting down, by millions of Iranians.

Let us not be fooled, Mr. Speaker. Rouhani is no moderate. He is an opportunist, and he is a lifelong adherent to the regime and its hateful ideology.

That is why this resolution is so important. We must make it clear that we truly support the people of Iran and their aspirations for a free and democratic society. Their protests are a referendum on the regime, and we must make it clear to all the regime officials that they will be held accountable for any human rights abuses in response to these protests.

But, Mr. Speaker, we must also not lose sight of the bigger picture. These protests are important, and it is important that we take action on human rights abuses. But this is just one aspect of the regime's illicit behavior, and sanctions against human rights violators is but one tool that we have at our disposal. The totality of the regime's nefarious and illicit activity is what the people of Iran are protesting against, and it would be unwise for us to lose focus of that bigger picture.

So while it is important that we stand here today in support of the people of Iran and we make it clear that there will be consequences for human rights abuses, we must make sure that we see the whole board here and connect the dots, and that means, Mr. Speaker, using all the tools at our disposal, because they are not isolated issues. They are all connected.

So, with that, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and to continue supporting a strong response to all of Iran's illicit activity and the use of all of the tools that we have at our disposal.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill.

In this House, we were on both sides of the Iran nuclear deal, but we were united in knowing that Iran is not an ally of the United States—at least, the Islamic Republic of Iran is not—and this House never agreed to ignore extreme human rights abuses simply because the Government of Iran has

agreed to limitations on its nuclear program.

This resolution puts us on the right side of history by stating that the House of Representatives stands with the people of Iran and condemns the Iranian regime's serious human rights abuses. It goes on to encourage the administration to expedite the licensing of communications technology to entities in Iran to improve the ability of the Iranian people to speak freely and also calls on companies around the world not to allow this regime to use any device or any technology to cut the Iranian people from social media and from other communications platforms.

□ 1430

We have seen in Iran a people dedicated to democracy and dedicated to improving their own lives. Over 1,000 Iranians have been arrested, and at least two dozen have been killed; this in a country with a great history. The Cyrus Cylinder is perhaps the first human rights document in world history. A model of it stands in the United Nations to commemorate the dedication of the Iranian people to human rights.

Today, they shout "No Gaza;" "No Lebanon;" "No Syria;" "My life for Iran," because they know that this regime's involvement in supporting terrorism around the world has not only devastated Syria, where Assad clings to power and half a million people have died, not only brings death and destruction to Lebanon and Yemen, but it has also devastated the Iranian economy, because this regime insists upon supporting Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis. Those are only the terrorist regimes whose names begin with H.

Of course, this regime has killed over 5,000 members of the LGBT community solely for who they are and whom they love.

This is a regime whose human rights record should, indeed, be criticized by the formal adoption of a resolution by this House of Representatives.

I also want to point out that the travel ban or Muslim ban implemented by this administration is harming our efforts to support the Iranian people at this time of crisis.

It says that if leaders of these demonstrations want to come to my community, where they have tens of thousands of Iranian-American supporters, they can't do it. And if, God forbid, they fear for their lives and want to flee, even if they are carefully vetted, they cannot set foot on American soil.

So I look forward to us standing with the people of Iran and eliminating the Muslim ban. I look forward to this House saying that we stand with the people who are putting their lives on the line to fight for democracy.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER), who is

the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 676, which puts America squarely on the side of courageous Iranians who risk their lives in opposition to the corruption and oppression of the mullah regime in Tehran.

Iran is a country made up of oppressed minorities. It is a country made up of Kurds—there are more Kurds in Iran than there are in Iraq—Balochis, Azeris, Arabs, and yes, anticlerical Persians. These people have lived under a regime that terrorizes their population into submission and supports terrorist attacks on other nations.

Unlike our last President, who closed his ears to the pleas of the Iranian oppressed and brutalized people—and also, I might add, facilitated the transfer of billions of dollars to that regime in the name of an arms control agreement—that President is gone, and our new President is making us proud today by endorsing the rights of those who are struggling for freedom and putting our country and people squarely on the side of those people who share our values in freedom and justice throughout the world.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER).

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bipartisan resolution, H. Res. 676, offered by my friends, Chairman ED ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. I thank my friend from Florida and my friend from California for leading us in this conversation today.

Less than 2 weeks ago, on December 28, protests began in towns and villages throughout Iran. These quickly and organically grew to become the largest antigovernment demonstrations the country has witnessed since those remarkable demonstrations in the summer of 2009.

Iranian citizens have taken to the streets to decry the regime's corruption, economic mismanagement, and destabilizing activities abroad, including support for such terrorist groups as Hezbollah.

The Iranian people, the good men and women seeking relief from the failings of the current regime, deserve our support. Their voices deserve to be heard. Not surprisingly, the response of the regime in Tehran to these protests have been predictably draconian.

News reports suggest dozens of Iranians have been killed in the crackdown on protests and more than 1,000 Iranians have been arrested. In an effort to silence the protesters, the Iranian Government has blocked access to social media platforms used to organize and spread word of the demonstrations.

This most recent crackdown is part of a long history of human rights

abuses by the Iranian Government, both at home through violent oppression and abroad through funding of groups that support terror.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that last month the House passed my amendment to the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act to help crack down on Iranian human rights abusers and ensure U.S. sanctions are best positioned to improve the human rights situation in Iran.

This is but one step. We need to do more to stop Iran's repression and persecution of different religious faiths, including Sunni Muslims, Christians, and Baha'is. We need to do more to stop the regime's arbitrary and unlawful killings. We must do more to protect the Iranian people's right to freedom of expression.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Illinois an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. This resolution is an opportunity for the American people to stand with the peaceful Iranian protesters and condemn the maligned activities of the oppressive Iranian regime.

In the days ahead, I urge this administration to hold the Iranian regime accountable to its international human rights obligation as well as work with our allies at the United Nations to condemn and sanction Iran for its ongoing human rights violations.

The Iranian Government is seeking to silence its people. Today's resolution shows we are watching and that we stand with the people of Iran. I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who is the chairman of the Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 676 and in solidarity with the people of Iran who courageously took to the streets in the recent weeks to protest their country's barbaric dictatorship.

I thank my good friends, ED ROYCE and ELIOT ENGEL, for their leadership in bringing this resolution to the floor. I also thank the chairwoman emeritus for her tremendous work over the years towards Iran in trying to get a policy that respects fundamental human rights and also ends their barbaric reign of terror and terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks, tens of thousands of Iranians participated in nationwide protests to condemn the corruption, repression, and brutality that together represent the unique legacy of Iran's nearly 40-year-old authority theocracy.

The regime responded with characteristic coercion, intimidating activists and employing government-spon-

sored thugs and military units to quell the unrest. Approximately 20 protesters died in clashes with security forces. At least 1,000 people were arrested. I am sure those 1,000 are being tortured as we meet here today. Some estimates place the number closer to 4,000 people.

This unrest is the inevitable consequence of a dictatorship built on brutality and corruption in the service of domestic repression and regional conquest. Ambassador Haley was absolutely right when she told the U.N. Security Council: "When the rights of the people are denied, the people rightly resist. If the concerns are not acknowledged, then peace and security are inevitably threatened."

I am very proud of the work this Congress has done over the years. In my subcommittee, we have held hearings on human rights abuses in Iran, including with Pastor Saeed Abedini, who did a tremendous job with his wife in trying to effectuate his relief.

We must hold Iran to account for the treatment of the hundreds of jailed protesters and not let their faith be forgotten with the next news cycle. We must work tirelessly to secure the liberty of our own citizens, including Xiyue Wang, a graduate student from my own State of New Jersey, who has spent the past 519 days in the Evin Prison complex.

Mr. Speaker, again, I urge support of the resolution.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SUOZZI), a member of our committee.

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, the people live like paupers while the mullahs live like gods.

For weeks, tens of thousands of brave Iranians have courageously stood up in over 70 cities and chanted: "The people live like paupers while the mullahs live like gods."

They challenge their failed government. They have done so in the face of violent repression, imprisonment, torture, and even death.

Why?

They are fed up. They are fed up with poverty and unemployment; fed up with economic deprivation and rampant corruption; fed up with an oppressive theocratic regime that mismanages their own country, mistreats its own people, and spends billions of dollars sowing the seeds of war and funding terrorists while its people suffer.

Ayatollahs recklessly pursued nuclear weapons instead of creating jobs and building infrastructure for their own people. The regime's apologists have long argued that these policies are popular and they give Iranians a national sense of pride, restoring their place as a regional power.

A regional power?

It is more like regional thugs.

In Iraq, Iranian-backed militias have executed and beat civilians, looted homes, and destroyed people's lives. In

Lebanon, Iranian-backed Hezbollah aims tens of thousands of rockets at Israeli citizens. Syria backs Bashar al-Assad's vicious regime. Iran sends weapons and money to militants in Yemen, Bahrain, and Gaza. It has become the biggest purveyor of mayhem in the Middle East, pouring billions of dollars into nefarious activities while their own people are impoverished.

Today, I rise with my colleagues to support the Iranian protesters and the bipartisan H. Res. 676. The United States and our allies should use the menu of sanctions available to us to target human rights violators and the Ayatollah's thugs who forcefully repress their fellow citizens.

We must ensure the protesters have access to social media, and we must let them know that we support them. Ayatollahs must know that the free world is watching.

The people live like paupers while the mullahs live like gods. The time has come for the people to rise up and change it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. McCAUL), the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, as well as a senior member on the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution condemning the Iranian regime's crackdown on legitimate protests and to show the world that America stands with the Iranian people who want peace, prosperity, and freedom.

For many years, we have known the regime in Iran has fueled radicalism and violence across the Middle East as the world's leading state sponsor of terror. But over the last few weeks, we have seen the brutal tactics Iran's leaders are willing to take to silence protesters who are fed up with extremism, corruption, and incompetence coming from their capital. The protesters deserve to have their voices heard without fear of retaliation.

Today, Iranians are not citizens who are free to choose their own destinies. They are subject to a fanatical dictatorship that fears the people it rules by denying their freedoms.

Sadly, the Obama administration believed that the Ayatollah and his radical clerics would be willing partners for peace, naively rewarding them with billions of dollars in sanction relief. It is clear, however, that, since the signing of the flawed Iran deal, the regime's behavior has only gotten worse by continuing its support for terror groups like Hezbollah and its backing of Houthi rebels in Yemen, all in pursuit of establishing a Shia crescent.

Fortunately, the current administration and this Congress will not be so easily fooled or complicit in their foreign adventurism. Leaders of rogue states will say whatever they must to bring unearned concessions from great powers.

But if it is real change that is desired, we must apply more pressure. We

cannot trust a country's government to be peaceful with other nations if it resorts to violence against its own people it is supposed to protect.

That is why I will soon introduce legislation that requires the Trump administration to determine whether senior members of the Government of Iran are responsible or complicit in human rights abuses, corruption, or censorship.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Texas an additional 30 seconds.

□ 1445

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, the bill also calls out the Iranian regime's practice of taking American citizens and other foreign nationals hostage, and lays out several steps the administration should take in conjunction with our allies to put an end to this practice.

A time will come when the tyrants of Tehran are held accountable for their actions. After many decades of authoritarian rule, Iranians deserve to be free. When democracy finally does flourish in Iran, the people will remember who stood by their side.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH).

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, in the past couple of weeks, tens of thousands of Iranian citizens from a broad cross-section of society took to the streets to demand accountability and change in their country. This was the largest mass protest since the Green Revolution in 2009.

Tragically, both ended in the same predictable darkness: harsh government crackdowns in which innocent peaceful protesters were arrested, were jailed, and were killed.

In the latest episode, more than 3,700 Iranian protesters were arrested and nearly two dozen were killed. The Iranian people deserve better and they deserve the support of all peoples who value and yearn for freedom.

Today's resolution sends an important message to the Iranian people, that we stand with them in their legitimate pursuit of reforms from a regime that would silence their voices and steal their fundamental liberties.

I also believe we should do more. I am proud to have introduced with Chairman McCAUL, along with support of Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act that goes one step further than condemnation to actually impose sanctions against those Iranian officials perpetrating these egregious human rights violations, as well as those responsible for kidnapping Americans, Americans like my own constituent, Bob Levinson, who has now spent more than 10 years in captivity.

Last week, we welcomed in a new year, and Bob's family again ushered in that new year without Bob by their side. For his sake and for the sake of the Iranian people trying to hold their own regime accountable for caring more about Assad and Hamas than they do about helping their own citizens, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H. Res. 676 to help bring the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act to the floor, and let's make sure that human rights remain exactly where they should in American foreign policy, right at the center of our agenda.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, who tells it just like it is.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, make no doubt about it, the number one terrorist in the world is the Ayatollah in charge of the butchery against his own people in Iran. He is the number one guy—the most wanted man in the world, as far as I am concerned, for terrorism lies at his feet.

He, along with the mullahs of Iran, continues to crack down violently on the people of Iran who are exercising a human right to protest the government that is in charge. The regime's brutality against its people knows no limit. To silence the crimes of the Ayatollah in Iran, they have blocked much of the internet and social media, including the telegram and Instagram. We must make sure that this important line of communication stays open for the Iranian people.

In 2009, there were about 1 million folks in Iran who had access to social media. Now there are about 20 million people, I understand, who have access to social media. Our administration must make sure that the American businesses and technology are still available to allow the Iranian people to document the regime's crimes against the people.

The Iranian people can bring about change on their own, but we must help by providing the necessary tools to empower democratic movements that the mullahs stand in fear of.

Mr. Speaker, in 2009, the Iranians rose up against the mullahs, but our government merely watched the arena of freedom in the streets of Iran while our government sat in the stands as a spectator. This is not a spectator sport. This is about freedom and human dignity.

The United States must politically, publicly, and economically support the people of Iran and let them know we will not be in the stands as a spectator any longer, and we must penalize the mullahs and the Ayatollah economically for their crimes.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank both gentlemen from California for their leadership and for their very important work on a very important crisis fight for human rights and freedom.

Just yesterday I rose to the floor of the House to recount my experience over the weekend joining the Iranian-American community in Houston on a busy corner at Post Oak and Westheimer. We joined together as Americans to begin to articulate that there is no divide when it comes to the freedom of speech, freedom for all to have access to protests and democracy.

So today I rise to support H. Res. 676, and I rise to speak in horror of the 1,000 Iranians that have been arrested and almost two dozen killed. We mourn their loss. We recognize that it has to be all of us, our allies included, that must stand and join in the language of this resolution, and it is, of course, to ensure that sanctions are pointedly targeted at those who want to oppress the protesters.

Interestingly enough, the protesters are now from rural and the middle class. The questions of the economy are very much a part of it, that Iranians are not able to live and to be able to have economic opportunity. Their young people have no growth. So this is far reaching, which is, of course, surprising to the regime.

They were hoping to quash this. They have no answers. And the answers should be a concerted, committed, and dedicated group of allies, including the United States, leading in efforts to support these protesters.

So I rise today to join in standing with the people of Iran in their legitimate and peaceful protest. I ask that the regime be condemned, and I ask that the communications, Mr. Speaker, be allowed to continue and that our companies don't reject—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding.

I believe it is so important that the communication—the work that we are getting ready to do here in the United States, to provide communications technology, needs to go forward. We must include in our petition—meaning our petition as Members of Congress—that our companies do not deny or quash the rights of Iranians to communicate with each other for peace, freedom, and democracy.

Our message to the regime is: it is time to open the doors of freedom in Iran. Iranian Americans, Americans, the United States Congress, and, of course, all of our government stand for peace, freedom, dignity, and democracy for the people of Iran.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from California (Mr.

ROYCE), and I ask unanimous consent that he control that time.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) is recognized.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today we stand with the people of Iran. We stand with people who are engaged in legitimate protests against an oppressive, corrupt regime.

There is a certain irony to this. This is a great people, the people of Iran. It was the Persian king, Cyrus the Great, who drafted the first declaration of human rights, the Cyrus Cylinder.

As you enter the United Nations, you see this quotation from him. This was a document meant to protect other cultures and it secured a special place in the history of civilization. His humanitarian values that he laid out of freedom for all peoples, respect for culture, for religious liberty, recognition of the fact that it is better to be loved than to be feared, these are remarkable attributes, especially at that point in time, and they were handed down as part of this deep Persian culture.

We, who live in free societies, owe a great debt to the Iranian people. They are the heirs to this culture. They are those who hold those values and ideas for governance that originally inspired the European Enlightenment, leaders of our own government here, our own Founding Fathers. It was Thomas Jefferson who told his grandson: These are the ideals you study first of Cyrus the Great in terms of governance.

Now, it is amazing that Iranians at this moment enjoy far fewer rights than their forefathers did. Cyrus was lauded for the protections he offered religious and ethnic minorities. We look at the state of affairs today and we see the repression of Iran's ethnic and religious minority populations from the Azerbaijanis to the Balochs, from the Kurds and the Arabs to the Baha'is and the Christians and the Zoroastrians.

You know, the regime authorities routinely deny those citizens the most basic human rights, and they do it through harassment and intimidation and detention and violence. And if you want to know what kind of violence, talk to the young Persians or talk to the young minorities who suffered through the torture in those prisons.

Why do they suffer through it?

Because they are trying to bring attention to the oppressiveness of that regime. Those young people yearn for human rights. They stand for the celebrated culture of the Persian people and for human rights. As this resolution makes clear, the United States House of Representatives fully supports those who have taken to the streets in Iran to exercise the fundamental freedom of expression and assembly.

We join them in the hope that their bravery will build the foundation for the emergence of a freely elected, open democratic political system in Iran. It is a moral imperative to support those who risk their lives demanding the freedoms that people in free societies enjoy every day.

That is why this resolution calls on all democratic governments and institutions worldwide to join us in clearly supporting the Iranian people's right to live in a free society. We all face a clear choice. We stand with the protesters and we stand with those who demand the basic rights and opportunities enjoyed in free societies.

We are not going to stand with the oppressors, those who steal the wealth of a great nation to enrich themselves and to fund violence abroad. Supporting the people of Iran is a strategic imperative. These brave men and women are standing up against the Revolutionary Guard's violent intervention in Syria and Lebanon as well. We must join them in demanding an end to the single greatest source of instability in the Middle East, and this is this obsession that the regime has with this ideology.

In standing with the Iranian people, we must explain that they are not the target of our sanctions. U.S. sanctions target the oppressive destabilizing regime, not the people of Iran. That is why, as this resolution makes clear, Congress has provided authority to license communications technology that improves the ability of the Iranian people to speak freely.

Today we call on the agencies involved to expedite those licenses. U.S. international broadcasting must also turn up the volume of its efforts in Iran and convey a message of hope and support. This should be conveyed by the young that know that this debate today in the American people's House is about this issue. Iranians must know that they are not alone in their struggle for freedom.

We also call on companies to reject requests by the regime to cut off the Iranian people from social media.

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These technologies are at their best when they are used to empower people and undermine the efforts of oppressive regimes.

There is more we can do, and I welcome Chairman McCaul and Congressman DEUTCH's introduction of bipartisan legislation that will give the administration greater leverage to target those responsible for ordering and carrying out human rights abuses in Iran. This includes the regime's practice of holding Americans and other foreigners hostage. Many of the regime's hostages are people of Iranian descent who came to visit family members, came to visit loved ones.

I am also working to introduce legislation that has the same goal as those who have bravely taken to the streets: to push the corrupt revolutionary

guard out of the Iranian economy. In doing so, it seeks to deny the guards the funds they use to hold power over the Iranian people while destabilizing Syria and destabilizing Lebanon.

Mr. Speaker, Congress and the administration have a great opportunity. We must work together on an approach to Iran that empowers the Iranian people and targets the corrupt regime which oppresses a great people. We cannot be quiet with the passage of this resolution. We state that America stands with the Iranian people.

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I commend our committee chairman for an outstanding speech.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER).

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of H. Res. 676, to urge support for this bipartisan resolution to help stop terror.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE and my good friend Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL for their leadership on this issue, and I am glad that this bipartisan resolution has proceeded swiftly to a vote on the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, the revolution of 1979 marked an enormous step backwards for global security and for the basic rights of the Iranian people, the longest suffering victims of this corrupt terrorist regime.

From its very beginnings, the Islamic Republic of Iran, under the control of its Supreme Leaders, has repeatedly violated the fundamental human rights of its own citizens.

In August, the U.N. Special Reporter on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran highlighted the Khamenei regime's many ongoing abuses, "including the arbitrary detention and prosecution of individuals for their legitimate exercise of a broad range of rights; the persecution of human rights defenders, journalists, students, trade union leaders, and artists; a high level of executions, including of juvenile offenders; the use of torture and ill treatment; widespread violations of the right to a fair trial and due process of law, especially before revolutionary courts; and a high level of discrimination against women and religious and ethnic minorities."

Beginning late last month, protestors across the country have taken to the streets to decry their dismal economic prospects; Iran's costly, aggressive, and destabilizing actions throughout the region; and an antidemocratic regime that stifles their rights and aspirations and supports terror. These brave men and women, engaged in peaceful demonstrations, have every right to demand change from their corrupt and oppressive terrorist government.

While Iranians live under a brutal, authoritarian mullahcracy at home, their government insists on bankrolling terror throughout the re-

gion. Iran has capitalized on sanctions relief, bolstering its arsenal of conventional arms and its illegal ballistic missile program, and increasing the funding of heinous terrorist organizations and proxies in Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq, as well as propping up the murderous regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

As the world's leading sponsor of terror, Iran provides more than \$800 million, annually, to Hezbollah and recently renewed its support for Hamas. Iranian-backed forces are also attempting to gain a foothold in Syria, right up against Israel's border, to threaten our vital ally and the leading democracy in the region.

There should be nothing partisan about having the backs of brave men and women anywhere who risk death to speak out for what is right and against a terrorist regime. This bipartisan resolution condemns the regime's censorship, violent crackdowns, and systematic repression. We must send a clear message to Iran that its destructive behavior throughout the Middle East will not be tolerated.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for the people of Iran to enjoy their fundamental right to a peaceful and democratic government. I urge each of my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan resolution to help stop terror.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, simple things mean a lot. That is why I, too, stand in support of H. Res. 676, which sends a clear message that the United States strongly condemns the arrest of peaceful protestors by the rogue Iranian regime.

Mr. Speaker, the Iranian people deserve to be free. The last administration witnessed such protests about 8 years ago and turned its back. The world saw that America turned their back on the freedom effort and movement in Iran.

The current administration has noticed immediately and recognized immediately, and we are here today to say that no longer will terrorism be appeased; no longer should we help pay for the funding of Hezbollah and Hamas through payments in the Iran nuclear deal.

Simple things mean a lot, and simple things like this resolution, Mr. Speaker, mean that we stand with the Iranian people who breathe and live to be free, just like we do.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER), a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, thank you for demonstrating that the House of Representatives stands with the people of Iran and condemns the country's brutal regime.

I rise today to applaud the Iranian people, who are struggling for dignity, human rights, and economic security under a shadow of oppression. We are a hemisphere away, but our hearts are with the brave men and women who are raising their voices in hopes that they will finally be free from the reins of tyranny.

The Iranian people are protesting the abuses of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and we must support their outrage by severely punishing and containing the IRGC with suffocating sanctions.

We must work with our allies to help Iranians communicate on the internet without restrictions. We must broadcast footage from protestors and hold authorities accountable for abuses.

America is an enthusiastic friend of the Iranian people. We are thrilled to support their aspirations for justice and liberty, and we stand with them as they take to the streets and demand an end to oppression.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The time of the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) has expired.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), and I ask unanimous consent that he be able to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN).

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in favor of this resolution demonstrating our support for the Iranian people's cry for democracy.

On December 28, 2017, tens of thousands of Iranians courageously poured into the streets to protest the brutality of President Rouhani's regime. Instead of caring for its own people, the Iranian regime focuses all of its energy on suffocating their cry, murdering protestors, while choking off communication via the internet and social media apps.

We have been down this road before. This is our second chance.

The Iranian people, smothered by their own government, look to us, and, instead of the chill of silence, this time, they are rightfully met with the full, immediate, and resounding support of the United States. We stand in solidarity with millions of Iranians desperate for support to help them turn the tide in Tehran and all throughout Iran.

The people of Iran will be losing a great champion with the retirement of Chairman ROYCE, who has served over the course of the last three terms as chairman of our committee. The fight continues.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution.

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bipartisan resolution. It will put America and this Congress on the side of the Iranian people.

Regardless of which side you are on as to the nuclear deal, we are all dedicated to peace and democracy in Iran and an end to its support for terrorism around the world, support that not only causes damage outside Iran's borders but, as the demonstrators shouting in over 50 Iranian cities have clearly indicated, devastates the economy of Iran.

To us here in Washington, we may believe that the face of this regime is that of Foreign Minister Zarif, the dapper, debonair diplomat, meeting with us in Geneva and Vienna. But the real face of this regime is that of Alan Kurdi, the 3-year-old Kurdish child found washed up on the beach in Turkey after fleeing the war in Syria, a war that has claimed nearly 500,000 lives because, and only because, Assad has been propped up by the Iranian regime. The other faces of this regime are the real faces of Iranian protestors who put their lives on the line for the freedom of their country.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that deserves the support of both sides of the aisle.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 resolution, H. Res. 676.

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. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays. The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

TAIWAN TRAVEL ACT

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 535) to encourage visits between the United States and Taiwan at all levels, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 535

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Taiwan Travel Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The Taiwan Relations Act (22 U.S.C. 3301 et seq.), enacted in 1979, has continued for 37 years to be a cornerstone of relations between the United States and Taiwan and

has served as an anchor for peace and security in the Western Pacific area.

(2) The Taiwan Relations Act declares that peace and stability in the Western Pacific area are in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States and are matters of international concern.

(3) The United States considers any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States.

(4) Taiwan has succeeded in a momentous transition to democracy beginning in the late 1980s and has been a beacon of democracy in Asia, and Taiwan's democratic achievements inspire many countries and people in the region.

(5) Visits to a country by United States cabinet members and other high-ranking officials are an indicator of the breadth and depth of ties between the United States and such country.

(6) Since the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act, relations between the United States and Taiwan have suffered from insufficient high-level communication due to the self-imposed restrictions that the United States maintains on high-level visits with Taiwan.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS; STATEMENT OF POLICY.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the United States Government should encourage visits between officials from the United States and Taiwan at all levels.

(b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It should be the policy of the United States to—

(1) allow officials at all levels of the United States Government, including cabinet-level national security officials, general officers, and other executive branch officials, to travel to Taiwan to meet their Taiwanese counterparts;

(2) allow high-level officials of Taiwan to enter the United States, under conditions which demonstrate appropriate respect for the dignity of such officials, and to meet with officials of the United States, including officials from the Department of State and the Department of Defense and other cabinet agencies; and

(3) encourage the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office, and any other instrumentality established by Taiwan, to conduct business in the United States, including activities which involve participation by Members of Congress, officials of Federal, State, or local governments of the United States, or any high-level official of Taiwan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. 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 this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 535, the Taiwan Travel Act, and I recognize Mr. CHABOT for his longstanding dedication and support to the people of Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, Taiwan succeeded in a momentous transition, a transition which took them to democracy. They did this decades ago, and since, it has become a beacon of democracy across the Asia-Pacific.

Taiwan is a strong friend and critical partner to the United States. Congress has been central to this longstanding bond, championing a strong relationship with Taiwan through a number of landmark measures, like the Taiwan Relations Act, impressing successive administrations to fulfill their obligation to sell defensive arms to Taiwan. Today, Congress continues this legacy with this Taiwan Travel Act, which has gained strong, bipartisan support.

We should encourage our officials to visit Taipei, to meet with their democratically elected counterparts on the many issues, the many programs, that we work on together, such as global health, commercial ties, global cooperation and training, the framework that we have in place. We should also welcome Taiwanese officials here.

Mr. Speaker, there are, in fact, no laws that bar our executive branch officials at any level from visiting Taiwan. The EPA Administrator in 2014 was the last executive branch official to visit Taiwan. A total of six Cabinet-level officials have visited Taiwan since 1979.

As our 10th largest trading partner, Taiwan deserves more attention. U.S. interests in the region deserve more respect. This bill encourages officials, at all levels of the U.S. Government, including Cabinet-level officials, to travel to Taiwan to meet their counterparts and vice versa.

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Mr. Speaker, we must build stronger ties in our relationship with Taiwan.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation, H.R. 535, the Taiwan Travel Act. I am pleased to have joined with Congressman CHABOT in introducing this bill, the Taiwan Travel Act.

Taiwan is not just an important trading partner, our 14th largest market. It is not just a land of 23 million people. It is a democratic ally of the United States, a place where our values are displayed in the Asia-Pacific region. Yet it would be surprising for most Americans to know that leaders from Taiwan are not allowed to visit the United States under any reasonable format. Instead, the President of Taiwan cannot visit Washington, D.C., but can visit Los Angeles for a refueling stop on the way to Costa Rica.

What an absurd fiction that the President of Taiwan would fly across the Pacific again and again to visit their friends in Costa Rica or other