


REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: February 27, 2018

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No. 18-0002-S3
Assignment No. 18-02-0119

SUBJECT: Resolution (Koretz-Martinez-Blumenfield) to SUPPORT H. Res. 676 (Royce).

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Koretz-Martinez-Blumenfield) to include in the City's 2017-2018 Federal Legislative Program, SUPPORT for H. Res. 676 (Royce) which would support the rights of the people of Iran to free expression and condemn the Iranian regime for its crackdown on legitimate protests, as further detailed in the text of the Resolution.

SUMMARY:

Resolution (Koretz-Martinez-Blumenfield), introduced January 12, 2018, states that the Iranian regime's response to recent popular protests has 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. The regime has also continued the closure of media outlets, arrests of journalists, and censorship of expression in online forums. The Resolution notes that Congress has provided authority to designate and sanction elements of the Iranian regime involved in significant corruption and serious human rights abuses. The Resolution advises that H. Res. 676 (Royce) would support the rights of the people of Iran to free expression and condemn the Iranian regime for its crackdown on legitimate protests. The Resolution therefore requests that the City support H. Res. 676.

BACKGROUND:

On December 28, 2017, popular protests against the Iranian regime began in the city of Mashad and rapidly spread throughout the country. H. Res. 676 (Royce) states that protestors have expressed numerous financial grievances, including the regime's widespread corruption and the Revolutionary Guard Corps' control of the country's economy. Additionally, protestors have decried the regime's costly, destabilizing activities abroad, including its support for terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and the Assad regime in Syria.

H. Res. 676 indicates that in response to the protests, more than 1,000 Iranians have been arrested and almost two dozen killed in connection with the protests. In addition, 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. Regime officials have threatened continued actions to further crack down on Iranian citizens.

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." In addition, the governments of the United Kingdom, France, and Canada have made statements in support of the Iranian protesters.

Adoption of H. Res. 676 would declare that the U.S. 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 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 discussion with and regarding Iran.

The City of Los Angeles has, on multiple occasions, expressed its strong commitment to support human rights and civil liberties for all members of the international community, including the freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of opinion and expression. Support for H. Res. 676 would be consistent with the City's previous positions.

The House has adopted H. Res. 676.

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED:

None

BILL STATUS:

01/09/18	Passed in House
01/05/18	Introduced in House



Alex Whitehead
Analyst

Attachment: 1. Resolution (Koretz-Martinez-Blumenfield)
2. HR 676 (Royce)

RESOLUTION RULES, ELECTIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

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; and

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; and

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; and

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

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; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 2018, regime officials threatened to crack down, with Brigadier General Esmaeil 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."; and

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

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; and

WHEREAS, on December 29, 2017, the U.S. Department of State strongly condemned the arrest of peaceful protesters and on January 1, 2018, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the **United Kingdom** has stated that there should be meaningful debate about the legitimate and important issues the protesters are raising, and on January 2, 2018, the **French** Foreign Ministry stated that demonstrating freely is a fundamental right and has expressed its concern over the large number of victims and arrests, and on January 1, 2018, the **Canadian** Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the Iranian authorities to uphold and respect democratic and human rights and reiterated its support for the fundamental rights of the Iranians, including freedom of expression; and

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

JAN 12 2018 WHEREAS, currently pending in Congress is a Resolution, H.Res.676 - *Supporting*

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the rights of the people of Iran to free expression, condemning the Iranian regime for its crackdown on legitimate protests, and for other purposes, which declares that the House of Representatives—

- (1) stands with the people of Iran who 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;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2017-2018 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for H.Res.676, supporting the rights of the people of Iran to free expression and condemning the Iranian regime for its crackdown on legitimate protests, as further detailed in the text of this Resolution.

PRESENTED BY:



PAUL KORETZ
Councilman, 5th District

SECONDED BY:



H. Res. 676

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

January 9, 2018.

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.

Attest:

Clerk.