

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 14

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By: **Delegates McComas, Afzali, Brooks, Buckel, Cassilly, Ebersole, Frush, Hettleman, Jacobs, Jones, Kittleman, McKay, Metzgar, Morhaim, Rey, Rose, Rosenberg, Shoemaker, Sydnor, Vogt, and West**

Introduced and read first time: March 2, 2018

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Support for the People of Iran**

3 FOR the purpose of supporting the people of Iran who are engaged in legitimate and
4 peaceful protests; condemning the Iranian regime's serious human rights abuses
5 against the Iranian people, significant corruption, and destabilizing activities
6 abroad; noting certain statements of support for certain protesters and certain calls
7 to support the Iranian people's right to live in a free society; demanding that the
8 Iranian regime abide by its international obligations with respect to human rights
9 and civil liberties; urging the President of the United States and the United States
10 Congress to take certain actions; calling on companies to reject certain requests of
11 the Iranian regime; respecting the proud history and rich culture of the Iranian
12 nation and fully supporting efforts of the people of Iran to promote the establishment
13 of basic freedoms to build the foundation for a freely elected, open, and democratic
14 political system; providing that a copy of this resolution be sent by the Department
15 of Legislative Services to certain individuals; and generally relating to the support
16 of the people of Iran.

17 WHEREAS, On December 28, 2017, popular protests against the Iranian regime
18 began in the city of Mashhad and rapidly spread throughout the country in the most
19 significant antigovernment protests in Iran since June 2009; and

20 WHEREAS, The protesters have expressed numerous economic grievances,
21 including the regime's widespread corruption and the Revolutionary Guard Corps' control
22 of the country's economy; and

23 WHEREAS, Protesters have decried the regime's costly and destabilizing activities
24 abroad, including its support for terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and the murderous
25 Assad regime in Syria; and

26 WHEREAS, Reports indicate that more than 1,000 Iranians have been arrested and



1 almost two dozen killed in connection with the protests; and

2 WHEREAS, The Iranian regime has shut down mobile Internet access and has
3 blocked and pressured companies to cut off social media applications used by activists to
4 organize and publicize the protests; and

5 WHEREAS, The United States Congress has provided authority to license the
6 provision of communications technology to Iran to improve the ability of the Iranian people
7 to speak freely; and

8 WHEREAS, On January 1, 2018, Iranian regime officials threatened to crack down
9 on the protesters, with Brigadier General Esmaeil Kowsari of Iran's Revolutionary Guard
10 Corps stating, "If this situation continues, the officials will definitely make some decisions
11 and at that point this business will be finished."; and

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

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

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

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

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

35 WHEREAS, On January 1, 2018, the Secretary of State for Foreign and
36 Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, stated that "The UK is
37 watching events in Iran closely. We believe that there should be meaningful debate about
38 the legitimate and important issues the protesters are raising and we look to the Iranian

1 authorities to permit this.”; and

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

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

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

14 WHEREAS, In violation of these and other international obligations, Iranian regime
15 officials continue to violate the fundamental human rights of the Iranian people; now,
16 therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the General
18 Assembly of Maryland:

19 (1) supports the people of Iran who are engaged in legitimate and peaceful
20 protests against an oppressive, corrupt regime;

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

23 (3) notes the statements of support for the protesters from key U.S. allies
24 and calls on all democratic governments and institutions to clearly support the Iranian
25 people’s right to live in a free society;

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

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

34 (6) encourages the President of the United States and the United States
35 Congress to expedite the license of communications technology to Iran to improve the
36 ability of the Iranian people to speak freely;

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

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

7 (9) urges the President of the United States and the U. S. Secretary of State
8 to work with the international community to ensure that violations of human rights are
9 part of all formal and informal multilateral or bilateral discussions with and regarding
10 Iran; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
12 Legislative Services to:

13 (1) the Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., Governor of Maryland; the
14 Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and the
15 Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and

16 (2) the Maryland Congressional Delegation: Senators Benjamin L. Cardin
17 and Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; and
18 Representatives Andrew P. Harris, C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger III, John P. Sarbanes,
19 Anthony G. Brown, Steny Hamilton Hoyer, John K. Delaney, Elijah E. Cummings, and
20 Jamie Raskin, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.