

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

CONDEMNING THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN'S STATE-SPONSORED PERSECUTION OF THE BAHAI MINORITY AND ITS CONTINUED VIOLATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 492) condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of the Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H. RES. 492

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021 and 2022, Congress declared that it deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and would hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i faith;

Whereas, since 1979, Iranian authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, and more than 10,000 Baha'is have been dismissed from government and university jobs;

Whereas June 18, 2023, marks the 40th anniversary of the execution of 10 Baha'i women by the Iranian Government each witnessing the hanging of those hanged before her in a final failed attempt to induce abandonment of their faith after over 6 months of imprisonment and violent abuse, with the youngest only 17 years old;

Whereas, on December 15, 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/C.3/77/L.34) criticizing Iran for human rights abuses and calling on Iran to carry out wide-ranging reforms, including—

(1) to end its "continuing disregard for protections under Iranian law or internationally recognized safeguards relating to the imposition of the death penalty" and "to commute the sentences for child offenders on death row";

(2) "to ensure, in law and in practice, that no one is subjected to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment";

(3) "to cease the widespread and systematic use of arbitrary arrests and detention";

(4) "to release persons detained for the exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms";

(5) "to address the poor conditions of prisoners";

(6) "to eliminate, in law and in practice, all forms of systemic discrimination and other human rights violations against women and girls";

(7) to cease the "increased harassment, intimidation, persecution, arbitrary arrest and detention of, and incitement to hatred that leads to violence against, persons belonging to recognized and unrecognized religious minorities, including Christians (particularly converts from Islam), Gonabadi Dervishes, Jews, Sufi Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Yarsanis, Zoroastrians, and, in particular, Baha'is, who have been subjected to a sudden increase in persecution, who have faced increasing restrictions and systemic persecution by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on account of their faith and

have been reportedly subjected to mass arrests and lengthy prison sentences, as well as the arrest of prominent members and increased confiscation and destruction of property"; and

(8) "to release all religious practitioners imprisoned for their membership in or activities on behalf of a minority religious group, to cease the desecration of cemeteries and to ensure that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief";

Whereas, in the 2023 Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom issued in April 2023, it is reported that—

(1) the Government of Iran "escalated its persecution of Baha'is, conducting nationwide arrests and spreading propaganda against the group";

(2) in February [2022], Judge Mohammadghasem Ain al-Kamali of Branch 1 of the Semnan Revolutionary Court ruled that [the parastatal entity known as] the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order (EIKO) could legally confiscate the property of Baha'is . . . Branch 54 of the Tehran Appeals Court upheld the decision in August following the destruction of six Baha'i houses in Rooshankooch;

(3) government officials arrested 14 Baha'is during a religious study in Ghaemshahr; and

(4) the Government of Iran "continued its systematic campaign of Baha'i arrests" throughout the latter part of 2022;

Whereas, in response to a surge in persecution in June and July 2022, involving the subjection of over 100 Baha'is to arrests, arraignments, sentencing, and raids on their homes and businesses across Iran, including the sentencing in June of 26 individuals in the city of Shiraz to a combined total of 85 years in prison, the Department of State's Office of International Religious Freedom issued a statement on August 2, 2022, indicating that "[a]mid a continued rise in arrests, sentences, and imprisonments, the U.S. urges Iran to halt its ongoing oppression of the Baha'i community and honor its international obligations to respect the right of all Iranians to freedom of religion or belief";

Whereas the Iran section of the Department of State's 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom issued in May 2023 provides, in part—

(1) "According to the Baha'i International Community (BIC), Amnesty International, multiple international news organizations, and the United Nations, in July and August, security forces in cities across the country conducted multiple raids of Baha'i homes, confiscated property deemed 'illegitimate wealth,' and arrested Baha'is in their homes or workplaces on unsubstantiated charges including 'causing intellectual and ideological insecurity in Muslim society.'";

(2) "In August, a group of UN human rights experts released a joint statement calling on the government to stop the increasing arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances of members of the Baha'i Faith and the destruction or confiscation of their properties in what the experts said 'bears all the signs of a policy of systematic persecution.'"; and

(3) "In their August 22 statement, the UN experts stated that as of April, more than 1,000 Baha'is awaited imprisonment, following their initial arrest and hearings.";

Whereas, on November 21, 2022, Ms. Mahvash Sabet and Ms. Fariba Kamalabadi, 2 former members of the disbanded informal 7-person leadership group of the Baha'is of Iran, who each served 10-year sentences from 2008 to 2018 and have been detained since July 31, 2022, in Evin prison, were sentenced to an additional 10 years in prison each after a summary trial lasting 1 hour; and on Feb-

ruary 10, 2023, another former member of the disbanded leadership group, Mr. Afif Naimi, who had also served a 10-year sentence from 2008 to 2018, was sentenced on February 10, 2023, to 7 years in prison, which he began to serve on April 29, 2023;

Whereas, on December 11, 2022, the Baha'i International Community organization reported that, "More than 320 Baha'is have been affected by individual acts of persecution since the arrest [on July 31, 2022] of Mahvash [Sabet] and Fariba [Kamalabadi]. Dozens were arrested at various points in Shiraz, across Mazandaran province, and elsewhere throughout the country. Homes owned by Baha'is in the village of Roshankouh were demolished. Government plans to tar the Baha'is through hate speech and propaganda were also exposed. And at least 90 Baha'is are currently in prison or subject to degrading ankle-band monitoring.";

Whereas, on April 21, 2023, the Department of State's Office of International Religious Freedom issued a statement in a tweet indicating that, "[w]e are deeply concerned following the news of Mahvash Sabet's injuries sustained while in prison. No one should be punished for their faith. We call on Iranian authorities to make sure Mrs. Sabet receives medical attention immediately and release her.";

Whereas Iran is a member of the United Nations and a signatory to both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, among other international human rights treaties, without reservation;

Whereas section 105 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8514) authorizes the President to impose sanctions on individuals who are "responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the commission of serious human rights abuses against citizens of Iran or their family members on or after June 12, 2009"; and

Whereas the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-158) amends and expands the authorities established under the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-195) to sanction Iranian human rights abusers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of the Baha'i minority in Iran and the continued violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(2) calls on the Government of Iran—

(A) to immediately release the imprisoned or detained Baha'is and all other prisoners held solely on account of their religion;

(B) to end its state-sponsored campaign of hate propaganda against the Baha'is; and

(C) to reverse state-imposed policies denying Baha'is and members of other religious minorities equal opportunities to higher education, earning a livelihood, due process under the law, and the free exercise of religious practices;

(3) calls on the President and the Secretary of State, in cooperation with responsible nations, to immediately condemn the Government of Iran's continued violation of human rights, and demand the immediate release of prisoners held solely on account of their religion; and

(4) urges the President and the Secretary of State to utilize available authorities to impose sanctions on officials of the Government of Iran and other individuals directly responsible for serious human rights abuses,

including abuses against the Baha'i community of Iran.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) and the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. DEAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, as the Iranian regime continues to violate human rights, we must condemn the regime's state-sponsored persecution of the Baha'i minority and its other ongoing abuses.

For the past year, Iran's barbaric human rights violations have faced renewed scrutiny following the regime's crackdown on peaceful protests after the murder of Mahsa Amini. Unfortunately, this sickening cruelty has become characteristic of the Iranian regime's control for over 40 years. The regime has consistently targeted the Baha'i and other religious minorities with harassment, discrimination, and violence.

For decades, the Iranian regime has terrorized the Baha'i, who face arbitrary arrest, forced disappearances, property confiscation, and economic discrimination at the hands of the regime.

Religious persecution in any form is repulsive, and we must condemn it in the strongest possible terms. That is why I cosponsored this resolution, which the gentlewoman from Illinois, Congresswoman SCHAKOWSKY, introduced.

This measure details Iran's ongoing crimes against the Baha'i minority and calls for further action to address these serious human rights abuses. Congress will continue to stand with all the people of Iran to defend their rights, including religious freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 492, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, while the Congress is rightly concerned about Iran's nefarious nuclear program, its missile proliferation, and its destabilizing activities around the globe, we cannot forget those who continue to struggle for religious freedom and democracy in Iran.

Iran's Baha'i community has long been the target of severe religious persecution by the Iranian regime. Much of its informal leadership has been arrested and many members of the com-

munity executed. The Baha'i are not permitted to practice their religion and culture. Their marriages are not recognized, their dead cannot be buried according to Baha'i law, and their cemeteries are desecrated.

In addition, the Baha'i are denied government jobs and business licenses. They are not permitted to enroll in public universities and Baha'i schoolchildren are frequently harassed by classmates, teachers, and administrators.

No human being deserves this type of treatment and certainly not at the hands of their government. As has been noted in this House in the past, the social teaching of the Baha'i faith, such as the equality of women and men, and the principle of each individual's responsibility to investigate the truth, are impossible for theocratic leaders of Iran to comprehend; yet, these are universal values, human values, and they must be protected.

Mr. Speaker, the United States and the international community cannot and will not ignore the systematic and violent attacks against the Iranian Baha'i community, and Tehran must be held accountable.

By passing this resolution, once again, we continue to shine a light on the persecution of the Baha'i, and hopefully move us one step closer to the day that true freedom reaches Iran.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time, and I am prepared to close.

Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives has passed this resolution in previous Congresses. We will pass this resolution today, and, if needed, we will pass this resolution again in the future.

We stand in solidarity with the persecuted Baha'i minority in Iran and demand the Iranian Government end its intolerable persecution of their people and religion.

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

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I thank Ranking Member MEEKS, Congresswoman DEAN, and the gentlewoman from Illinois for offering this bipartisan resolution in support of human rights and religious freedom for the Baha'i community in Iran.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 492—"Condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of the Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights."

Since 1979, Iranian authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, and more than 10,000 Baha'is have been dismissed from government and university jobs.

June 18, 2023, marks the 40th anniversary of the execution of 10 Baha'i women by the Iranian Government each witnessing the hanging of those hanged before her in a final failed attempt to induce abandonment of their faith after over 6 months of imprisonment and violent abuse, with the youngest only 17 years old.

In the previous years, the Congress has declared that it deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and would hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i faith.

On December 15, 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/C.3/77/L.34) criticizing Iran for human rights abuses and calling on Iran to carry out wide-ranging reforms, including:

End its continuing disregard for protections under Iranian law or internationally recognized safeguards relating to the imposition of the death penalty and to commute the sentences for child offenders on death row.

Ensure, in law and in practice, that no one is subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and eliminate in law and in practice, all forms of systemic discrimination and other human rights.

Cease the widespread and systematic use of arbitrary arrests and detention and releasing persons detained for the exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Through June and July 2022, there had been a surge in persecution of Baha'is including the subjection of over 100 Baha'is to arrests, arraignments, sentencing, and raids on their homes and businesses across Iran, as well as the sentencing of 26 individuals in the city of Shiraz to a combined total of 85 years in prison.

In response the Department of State's Office of International Religious Freedom issued a statement on August 2, 2022, indicating that "[a]mid a continued rise in arrests, sentences, and imprisonments, the U.S. urges Iran to halt its ongoing oppression of the Baha'i community and honor its international obligations to respect the right of all Iranians to freedom of religion or belief."

The Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-158) amends and expands the authorities established under the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-195) to sanction Iranian human rights abusers.

Resolved as follows:

Therefore, be it resolved that the House of Representatives, condemns the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of the Baha'i minority in Iran and the continued violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Calls on the Iranian government to immediately release the imprisoned or detained Baha'is and all other prisoners held solely on account of their religion.

Calls on the Iranian Government to end its state-sponsored campaign of hate propaganda against the Baha'is and to reverse the state-

imposed policies denying Baha'is and members of other religious minorities equal opportunities to higher education, earning a livelihood, due process under the law, and the free exercise of religious practices.

Calls on the President of the United States and the Secretary of State, in cooperation with responsible nations, to immediately condemn the Government of Iran's continued violation of human rights, and demand the immediate release of prisoners held solely on account of their religion; and urges the President and the Secretary of State to utilize available authorities to impose sanctions on officials of the Government of Iran and other individuals directly responsible for serious human rights abuses, including abuses against the Baha'i community of Iran.

H. Res. 492, is an important bill supporting Congress' longstanding position condemning such atrocities against religious minorities.

I, therefore, urge all members to support this important legislation and reenforce this longstanding objection and condemnation to these horrific atrocities and inhumanity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. McCAUL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 492.

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. McCAUL. 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.

ACCURATELY COUNTING RISK ELIMINATION SOLUTIONS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1567) to require that the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior submit accurate reports regarding hazardous fuels reduction activities, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1567

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 "Accurately Counting Risk Elimination Solutions Act" or the "ACRES Act".

SEC. 2. ACCURATE HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION REPORTS.

(a) INCLUSION OF HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION REPORT IN MATERIALS SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning with the first fiscal year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary concerned shall include in the materials submitted in support of the President's budget pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, a report on the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during the preceding fiscal year.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—For purposes of the report required under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall—

(A) in determining the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during the period covered by the report—

(i) record acres of Federal land on which hazardous fuels reduction activities were completed during such period; and

(ii) record each acre described in clause (i) once in the report, regardless of whether multiple hazardous fuels reduction activities were carried out on such acre during such period; and

(B) with respect to the acres of Federal land recorded in the report, include information on—

(i) which such acres are located in the wildland-urban interface;

(ii) the level of wildfire risk (high, moderate, or low) on the first and last day of the period covered by the report;

(iii) the types of hazardous fuels activities completed for such acres, delineating between whether such activities were conducted—

(I) in a wildfire managed for resource benefits; or

(II) through a planned project;

(iv) the cost per acre of hazardous fuels activities carried out during the period covered by the report;

(v) the region or system unit in which the acres are located; and

(vi) the effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction activities on reducing the risk of wildfire.

(3) TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary concerned shall make each report submitted under paragraph (1) publicly available on the website of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, as applicable.

(b) ACCURATE DATA COLLECTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall implement standardized procedures for tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out by the Secretary concerned.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The standardized procedures required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) regular, standardized data reviews of the accuracy and timely input of data used to track hazardous fuels reduction activities;

(B) verification methods that validate whether such data accurately correlates to the hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out by the Secretary concerned;

(C) an analysis of the short- and long-term effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction activities on reducing the risk of wildfire; and

(D) for hazardous fuels reduction activities that occur partially within the wildland-urban interface, methods to distinguish which acres are located within the wildland-urban interface and which acres are located outside the wildland-urban interface.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 2 weeks after implementing the standardized procedures required under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(A) such standardized procedures; and

(B) program and policy recommendations to Congress to address any limitations in tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities under this subsection.

(c) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a study on the implementation of this Act, including any limitations with respect to—

(A) reporting hazardous fuels reduction activities under subsection (a); or

(B) tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities under subsection (b); and

(2) submit to Congress a report that describes the results of the study under paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION ACTIVITY.—The term "hazardous fuels reduction activity"—

(A) means any vegetation management activity to reduce the risk of wildfire, including mechanical treatments and prescribed burning; and

(B) does not include the awarding of contracts to conduct hazardous fuels reduction activities.

(2) FEDERAL LANDS.—The term "Federal lands" means lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture.

(3) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term "Secretary concerned" means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System lands; and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public lands and units of the National Park System.

(4) WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—The term "wildland-urban interface" has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511).

(e) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.—No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act, and the activities authorized by this Act are subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1567, as amended, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of Representative TIFFANY's legislation, H.R. 1567, the Accurately Counting Risk Elimination Solutions, or ACRES Act.

This is a commonsense, good governance bill that will bring sorely needed transparency and accountability to the misleading way our Federal land managers are tracking and reporting hazardous fuel treatments.

We remain in the midst of a historic catastrophic wildfire crisis that has devoured an average of 7 million acres every year for the last two decades. This alarming figure is more than double the annual losses seen during the 1990s.