

112TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Calling for free and fair elections in Iran, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Calling for free and fair elections in Iran, and for other purposes.

Whereas democracy, human rights, and civil liberties are universal values and fundamental principles of United States foreign policy;

Whereas an essential element of democratic self-government is for leaders to be chosen and regularly held accountable through elections that are organized and conducted in a manner that is free, fair, inclusive, and consistent with international standards;

Whereas governments whose power does not derive from free and fair elections lack democratic legitimacy;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a signatory to the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted December 16, 1966

(ICCPR), which states that every citizen has the right to vote “at genuine periodic elections” that reflect “the free expression of the will of the electors”;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran regularly violates its obligations under the ICCPR, holding elections that are neither free nor fair nor consistent with international standards;

Whereas elections in Iran are marred by the disqualification of candidates based on their political views; the absence of credible international observers; severe restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association, including censorship, surveillance, and disruptions in telecommunications, and the absence of a free media; widespread intimidation and repression of candidates, political parties, and citizens; and systemic electoral fraud and manipulation;

Whereas the last nationwide election held in Iran, on June 12, 2009, was widely condemned inside Iran and throughout the world as neither free nor fair and provoked large-scale peaceful protests throughout Iran;

Whereas, following the June 12, 2009, election, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran responded to peaceful protests with a large-scale campaign of politically motivated violence, intimidation, and repression, including acts of torture, cruel and degrading treatment in detention, rape, executions, extrajudicial killings, and indefinite detention;

Whereas, on December 26, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution denouncing the serious human rights abuses occurring in the Islamic Republic of Iran;

Whereas authorities in Iran continue to hold several candidates from the 2009 election in indefinite detention;

Whereas authorities in Iran have announced that nationwide parliamentary elections will be held on March 2, 2012;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has banned more than 2,200 candidates from participating in the March 2, 2012, elections, including current members of parliament;

Whereas no domestic or international election observers are scheduled to oversee the March 2, 2012, elections;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to hold leading opposition figures under house arrest;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to prevent the people of Iran from accessing news and information by incarcerating more journalists than any other country in the world, according to a 2011 report from the Committee to Protect Journalists; disrupting access to the Internet, including blocking e-mail and social networking sites and limiting access to foreign news and websites, developing a national Internet that will facilitate government censorship of news and information, and jamming international broadcasts such as the Voice of America's Persian News Network and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Radio Farda; and

Whereas opposition groups in Iran have announced they will boycott the March 2, 2012, election because they believe it will be neither free nor fair nor consistent with international standards: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

1 (1) reaffirms the commitment of the United
2 States to democracy, human rights, civil liberties,
3 and rule of law, including the universal rights of
4 freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and free-
5 dom of association;

6 (2) expresses support for freedom, human
7 rights, civil liberties, and rule of law in Iran, and for
8 elections that are free, fair, and meet international
9 standards, including granting independent inter-
10 national and domestic electoral observers unre-
11 stricted access to polling and counting stations;

12 (3) expresses strong support for the people of
13 Iran in their peaceful calls for a representative and
14 responsive democratic government that respects
15 human rights, civil liberties, and the rule of law;

16 (4) reminds the Government of the Islamic Re-
17 public of Iran of its obligations under the inter-
18 national covenants to which it is a signatory to hold
19 elections that are free and fair;

20 (5) condemns the Government of the Islamic
21 Republic of Iran's widespread human rights viola-
22 tions;

23 (6) calls on the Government of the Islamic Re-
24 public of Iran to respect freedom of expression and
25 association in Iran by—

1 (A) ending arbitrary detention, torture,
2 and other forms of harassment against media
3 professionals, human rights defenders and ac-
4 tivists, and opposition figures, and releasing all
5 individuals detained for exercising universally
6 recognized human rights;

7 (B) lifting legislative restrictions on free-
8 doms of assembly, association, and expression;
9 and

10 (C) allowing the Internet to remain free
11 and open and allowing domestic and inter-
12 national media to operate freely;

13 (7) further calls on the Government of the Is-
14 lamic Republic of Iran to allow international election
15 monitors to be present for the March 2, 2012, elec-
16 tions; and

17 (8) urges the President, the Secretary of State,
18 and other world leaders—

19 (A) to express support for the universal
20 rights and freedoms of the people of Iran, in-
21 cluding to democratic self-government;

22 (B) to broaden engagement with the people
23 of Iran and support efforts in the country to
24 help promote human rights and democratic re-
25 form, including by providing appropriate fund-

1 ing to civil society organizations for democracy
2 and governance activities; and
3 (C) to condemn elections that are not free
4 and fair and that do not meet international
5 standards.