



United Jewish Communities

The Federations of North America | Live Generously™

FACING THE GROWING CRISIS IN IRAN

Please urge your Senators and Representatives to recognize the threats posed by Iran and support measures to diplomatically and economically pressure Iran. The United States' campaign to economically isolate Iran is beginning to show results, bolstering the argument that strong sanctions could stop Tehran's pursuit of nuclear arms and prevent unnecessary violence and destruction.

The Legislation:

- **Support Sanctions Against Iran:** The House passed and the Senate is considering comprehensive legislation aimed at increasing economic and political pressure on Iran to end its nuclear program (H.R. 1400/S. 970). There are currently 70 bipartisan cosponsors in the Senate. Introduced in the House by the late Representative Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and in the Senate by Senators Gordon Smith (R-OR) and Dick Durbin (D-IL), the legislation closes loopholes in existing U.S. sanctions law, increases economic pressure on Iran, and urges state pension funds to divest holdings from companies investing in Iran's energy sector. The bill passed the House on Sept. 25 (397-16). **Please thank members of the House who voted for the bill. Please urge Senators to cosponsor S. 970 and bring the bill to the Senate floor for a vote.**
- **Support Divestment From Iran:** The House passed the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2007 (H.R. 2347/S. 1430), 408-6, on July 31. The bill authorizes state and local governments to divest from companies investing in Iran's petroleum and natural gas sector and protects fund managers who divest from such companies from potential lawsuits. The legislation carries strong bipartisan support, having been introduced in the House by Representatives Barney Frank (D-MA) and Christopher Shays (R-CT) and in the Senate by Senators Barack Obama (D-IL) and Sam Brownback (R-KS) introduced the bill in the Senate. There are currently 26 bipartisan Senate cosponsors. **Please thank your Representatives for their vote and urge your Senators to cosponsor the bill.**

Background:

Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and repeated calls for the destruction of both Israel and the United States compel us to act before it is too late. The world cannot allow Iran to achieve its goal of becoming a nuclear power. In 2006, The U.N. Security Council passed a resolution imposing sanctions on Iran for failing to end its enrichment of uranium, and Iran continues to defy the U.N. Security Council's demand that it suspend such efforts. In fact, the U.N. Security Council – for the third time in fifteen months – declared Iran a threat to international peace and security and demanded Iran immediately suspend all uranium enrichment and its construction of a heavy-water reactor designed to produce plutonium. The Council's third round of sanctions follows the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report that Iran has conducted sophisticated research on technologies

needed to build and deliver a nuclear weapon. In addition, Iran is preventing 28 IAEA inspectors from entering the country and has kicked out the U.N. official overseeing inspections.

Despite the recent National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) Report, there is little doubt Iran is pursuing technology that can be used to create nuclear weapons: they have developed the long range Shihab-3 ballistic missile capable of delivering a nuclear payload that could reach Israel, American interests in the Middle East, and much of Europe. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, continues to engage in anti-Semitic rhetoric, to deny the historic truth of the Holocaust, and to call for the immediate destruction of Israel. Iranian Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was recently quoted as calling "the destruction of the Jewish state as the only solution to the conflict in the Middle East."

Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran's leaders have viewed the United States and Israel as enemies and have provided extensive financing, training and overall support to terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah, Hamas, Al Qaeda, and Islamic Jihad. The imminent threat of their nuclear program, their repeated calls for the destruction of Israel and their recent pledges of support to Hamas and Hezbollah have only exacerbated the danger they pose to the national security interests of Israel and the United States and continue to threaten world peace and stability.

The Jewish community supports economic and political sanctions on Iran because:

- Led by the U.S. Treasury Department, efforts to convince international businesses of the risks of doing business with an Iran are having a positive effect. Iran's economy has been on the decline since Ahmadinejad was elected but has continued to stay afloat mostly due to the high price of oil. However, Iran requires major foreign investment in order for its oil industry to increase or maintain oil profits, and investors have become wary. Iran's deputy oil minister for international affairs recently stated that the Iranian government needs to control domestic oil consumption and seek capacity-increasing investments or there will be no oil for export within 10 years. The Iranian government has already cut its budget for next year to compensate for expected oil revenue losses.
- Recent economic sanctions against Iran have produced tangible waves on the Iranian street. Prices for foods such as beef, poultry, fruits and bread have increased by 25 percent, and housing costs have risen 30 percent, leading average Iranians to lose patience with their leader's inability to improve the economy. Faced with economic difficulties, both reformists and traditional conservatives have repudiated the president's policies. In recent local elections, candidates affiliated with Ahmadinejad and his views lost an overwhelming 90 percent of their seats.
- Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has for the first time allowed hard-line newspapers to run strongly worded editorials rebuking Ahmadinejad for his defiance of U.N. Security Council demands for an end to Iran's atomic program.

United Jewish Communities urges Congress to continue supporting meaningful economic and political sanctions on Iran until Tehran abandons its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

For further information, please contact William Daroff, Vice President for Public Policy and Director of UJC's Washington Office, (202)785-5900 or william.daroff@ujc.org.

United Jewish Communities (UJC) represents and serves 155 Jewish federations and 400 independent Jewish communities across North America. UJC reflects the values of social justice and human rights that define the Jewish people. Our federation system comprises one of the world's largest and most effective networks of social service providers and programs.