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AIPAC APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF IRAN SANCTIONS BILL

AIPAC applauds today's overwhelming House passage of (H.R. 1400) the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act, comprehensive sanctions legislation that strengthens U.S. tools to thwart Iran's nuclear program. The House approved the bill by a vote of 397-16. AIPAC strongly supports Congressional efforts and those of the Administration and American allies to increase pressure on the Iranian regime to end its pursuit of nuclear weapons capability.

The legislation urges the president to add the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)—a military organization that controls a significant portion of Iran's economy and has armed, funded and trained terrorist groups around the world—to U.S. terror lists. The designation would isolate the Iranian regime, cutting off U.S. business contact with all IRGC-controlled industries and any company doing business with the IRGC. The Senate is also expected to consider an amendment, sponsored by Sens. Jon Kyl (R-AZ) and Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), with similar language on the IRGC later today.

H.R. 1400 prohibits U.S. nuclear agreements with Russia and other nations until they cease nuclear cooperation with Iran. It ends all Iranian exports to the United States and authorizes increased funding for U.S. agencies working to cut off Iran from the international banking system.

The bill also closes loopholes in existing sanctions law, mandating the imposition of U.S. sanctions against foreign companies who do business with Iran's energy sector and extending those sanctions to include foreign subsidiaries of U.S.-owned companies and American subsidiaries of foreign-owned companies.

Iran has repeatedly violated its obligations as a member of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and has continued to spurn demands of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the international community and the UN Security Council that it suspend its uranium enrichment program. A nuclear capable Iran poses a direct threat to the security of the United States and our allies and threatens to spark a dangerous nuclear arms race in an already destabilized region.

To change Iran's course, the United States and the international community must use every economic, diplomatic and political tool available. U.S. sanctions have already helped to discourage investment in and banking cooperation with Iran, and further international action may be able to persuade the Iranian government to comply with its international obligations.

AIPAC commends the efforts of ICIPA's sponsors, House Foreign Affairs Chairman Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL). Prior to passage, the bill had gained over 320 cosponsors in the House. Similar legislation, sponsored by Sens. Gordon Smith (R-OR) and Richard Durbin (D-IL), currently awaiting consideration by the Senate, has 69 cosponsors.

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