

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2010

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are encouraged by your powerful statement during your first State of the Union Address: "As Iran's leaders continue to ignore their obligations, there should be no doubt: they, too, will face growing consequences." However, while economic sanctions and international isolation are necessary, we believe the greatest threat to the Iranian regime will come from the liberation of its own people. We ask you to support those fighting for freedom and democracy in Iran.

The United States must stand by the countless Iranians who have stood defiantly against the regime. We must call for the release of all political detainees and prisoners, and demand the cessation of torture, rape and other human rights violations. As the leader of the free world, the United States has a moral obligation to support the courageous men and women in Iran who are demanding freedom and democracy at risk of arrest, imprisonment, and execution. Iran's dissidents will not stop fighting. We should not stop fighting for them.

In addition, those demanding freedom have relied heavily on the internet to inform the Iranian people, organize protests, and update others worldwide about the regime's violence against its own people. We should assist Iranian dissidents by helping them to circumvent state censorship through access to relevant internet technologies, while ensuring that access to such technologies cannot be exploited by the regime in any way.

Finally, we implore you to investigate reported mismanagement and bias at Voice of America's Persian News Network (VOA-PNN). The apparent lack of oversight regarding the management, staffing, mission, and content of VOA-PNN broadcasting – an American-taxpayer-funded program – ironically may have harmed the plight of those seeking human rights, instead of helping it.

The United States, through principled rhetorical and material support, can help the Iranian people to achieve self-determination, human rights, democracy, and freedom.

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Trent Franks
Member of Congress

Sharon Rife GA-6

Tommy Thompson

Lamar Smith

W. Todd Akin MO-2

Barbara M. Lee MD-6

Greg Pitts PA-16

Jeff Sessions AL-2

Mary Fallin OK-5

Michelle Bachmann
Mike Griffith

John Hoadley AZ-3

Lois Lichtenstein TX-1

K. Michael TX-11

Rep. Olson TX-22

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Paul Ryan WI-01

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Jim Bilbray

Art Laffer VT-3

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Robert B. Aderholt

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John Culberson

Bill Posey

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