



Press Release of Senator Santorum

SENATOR SANTORUM SPONSORS LEGISLATION SUPPORTING TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN IRAN

Contact: Christine Shott, (202) 224-4474
Tuesday, July 20, 2004

Washington, DC - U.S. Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA), Chairman of the Senate Republican Conference, introduced legislation promoting the transformation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to a democratic form of government. Joining Senator Santorum as an original cosponsor of the Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2004 is Senator John Cornyn (R-TX).

"This legislation expresses the sense of the Congress that it should be the policy of the United States to support regime change in Iran and that the U.S. government should promote the transition to a new democratic Iranian government," said Santorum.

The Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2004 authorizes the President to provide \$10 million in assistance to qualified foreign and domestic pro-democracy groups opposed to the non-democratic government of Iran. As an example of the type of assistance authorized, grants to pro-democracy radio and television broadcasting organizations as a way of directly reaching the people of Iran are specifically encouraged.

"The aggressive actions by the Government of Iran to support terrorist organizations, develop ballistic missiles, urge violence against Americans in Iraq, and hide information about its nuclear activities are a major concern to those who value peaceful relations between people living in the Middle East and to United States' national security objectives in the region," said Santorum.

In order to be eligible for funding, a pro-democracy group must renounce the use of terrorism; pledge to adhere to nonproliferation regimes; pledge to destroy all prohibited stores of weapons of mass destruction; and support the adoption of a democratic form of government in Iran.

In addition, groups authorized to receive funding should be dedicated to democratic ideals; show a commitment to human rights; demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity; and support freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of association.

Finally, as a reassurance to those with concerns of U.S. military involvement in Iran, this legislation does not authorize or otherwise approve of the use of the Armed Forces of the United States.

"In recent years, we have seen the people of Iran seek greater freedoms and liberties," said Santorum. "While efforts to engage the current government of Iran have produced few benefits, this legislation recognizes the people of Iran, who have voted for increased freedoms and have demonstrated on behalf of democratic principles."

###