

A RESOLUTION demanding the United States government to demand the release of Pastor Saeed Abedini, a United States citizen from Boise, Idaho, being held prisoner in Iran.

WHEREAS, Saeed Abedini grew up a devout Muslim and was trained by terrorists to become a suicide bomber. While on his way to murder a Christian pastor, he came across two Christian strangers who shared the gospel with him and prayed for him. Following this experience, Mr. Abedini decided to not go through with his suicide attacks and, over the next few weeks, came to accept Christ as his Savior; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Abedini then began evangelizing to Muslims while helping to form an underground house-church movement in Iran. While Christianity is an official religion in Iran, the Islamic republic does not allow former Muslims to attend Christian churches and many Muslim converts face the death penalty. By 2005, Mr. Abedini had become the leader of about 2,000 Christian house-church members. During this time, Mr. Abedini had been arrested and imprisoned many times, but was always eventually set free after a short period; and

WHEREAS, due to increased persecution, Saeed Abedini and his wife, Naghmeh, moved to the United States. On a trip back to Iran in 2009, Mr. Abedini was detained and forced to sign an agreement saying he could enter and exit the country freely as long as did not work with the house-church movement. Mr. Abedini continued to travel back and forth to Iran to help build a nonsecretarian orphanage and to visit family; and

WHEREAS, while in Iran visiting family in 2012, Saeed Abedini was taken prisoner when Iranian officials raided the Abedini family home in Iran and arrested Mr. Abedini, refusing him the right to see an attorney and denying him knowledge of what his formal charges were until a week before his trial; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Abedini suffered the indignity of facing Judge Abbas Pirabbasi, who is known internationally as the "hanging judge" for all the political prisoners he has sent to the gallows; and

WHEREAS, Iranian-American pastor Seed Abedini, initially held in Tehran's notoriously bad Evan Prison on charges of attempting to sway the minds of Iranian youth from Islam to Christianity, has now been sentenced to eight years in Evan Prison. Less than a week before his trial, the United States Commission of International Religious Freedom labeled the charges against Mr. Abedini as "bogus"; and

WHEREAS, Iranian authorities have reneged on repeated promises to release Mr. Abedini;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. The House of Representatives demands that the United States government in the strongest possible terms use every tool of influence available to secure the release of Saeed Abedini, and finds that Mr. Abedini is a dual Iranian-United States citizen whose civil liberties have been trampled on by the Iranian government and judicial system and who has seemingly been imprisoned in Iran for merely being a Christian.

➔Section 2. The House of Representatives also demands that the Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations personally intervene to correct the human rights abuses to which his government has subjected Mr. Abedini, and recognize that improved relations between our nations are threatened when American citizens are treated so callously.

➔Section 3. The Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to President Barack Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20500; Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, 317 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20501; Senator Rand Paul, 1100 South Main Street, Suite 12, Hopkinsville, Kentucky 42240; Representative Ed Whitfield, 1403 South Main Street, Hopkinsville, Kentucky 42240; Representative Brett Guthrie, 1001 Center Street, Suite 300, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101;

Representative John Yarmuth, Romano Mazzoli Federal Building, 600 Martin Luther King, Jr. Place, Suite 216, Louisville, Kentucky 40202; Representative Thomas Massie, 300 Buttermilk Pike, Suite 101, Fort Mitchell, Kentucky 41017; Representative Hal Rogers, 551 Clifty Street, Somerset, Kentucky 42503; Representative Andy Barr, 2709 Old Rosebud Road, Lexington, Kentucky 40509; Secretary of State John Kerry, United States Department of State, 2201 C Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20520; Gholamali Khoshroo, Ambassador of Iran to the United Nations, 622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor, New York, New York 10017; and Mrs. Naghmeh Abedini, c/o Nathanael Bennett, 201 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, D.C. 20002.