

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HM 1405 Captivity of Robert Levinson in Iran

SPONSOR(S): Local and Federal Affairs Committee, Moskowitz

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Local & Federal Affairs Committee	15 Y, 0 N, As CS	Baker	Rojas
2) Economic Affairs Committee	15 Y, 0 N	Thompson	Creamer

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The memorial asks Congress and the President to utilize all their resources to return Robert Levinson to the United States (U.S.) from his captivity in Iran.

In 2007, Robert Levinson, a U.S. citizen and Florida resident, was kidnapped while visiting Iran. According to anonymous photographs sent to his family, he is still alive and held captive. Despite the Department of State's prioritization of the matter, his whereabouts are unknown.

The government of Iran has promised in 2008 and 2013 to assist in this matter; however, reports indicate the government of Iran has failed to provide Robert Levinson's family with the results of any investigation.

The memorial has no fiscal impact.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Current Situation

In March 2007, Robert Levinson disappeared from Iran's Kish Island.¹ Robert Levinson is a U.S. citizen; resident of Coral Springs, Florida; and previously served as an agent in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).² Robert Levinson was visiting Iran as a private investigator when he was kidnapped.³

In 2008, the Iranian government promised it was "ready to help, to assist with that matter."⁴ The Levinson family still has not received the results of any investigation that Iran conducted on the matter.⁵ Recently, Iran's foreign minister promised to help discover what happened to Robert Levinson while also stating that Iranian information showed Robert Levinson was not in Iran.⁶

In 2011, Robert Levinson's family received photos of him alive and holding signs that were apparently created by his captors.⁷ The Levinson family has recently released those photographs to the public.⁸

In 2012, the FBI announced a \$1 million reward for useful information on Robert Levinson's location.⁹

This month, Secretary of State John Kerry met with Robert Levinson's family to assure them the U.S. government wishes to locate Robert Levinson and return him to his family in Florida.¹⁰ Despite the Department of State's assigning a priority to Mr. Levinson's return and repeating its commitment, his location remains a mystery to his family.¹¹

Robert Levinson suffers from diabetes, and it is unknown whether he is receiving proper and necessary treatments for survival.¹² He is a husband and father of seven children and two grandchildren.¹³

¹ Lee Ferran and Brian Ross, "Kidnapped Ex-FBI Agent's Wife to Hold Iran to Its Promise of Help," Mar. 11, 2013, *available at* <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/robert-levinson-kidnapped-fbi-agents-wife-hold-iran/story?id=18703518> (last visited Mar. 12, 2013).

² "Report: Iran says it will help learn the fate of ex-FBI agent who went missing 6 years ago," FoxNews, Mar. 11, 2013, *available at* <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/03/11/report-iran-says-it-will-help-learn-fate-ex-fbi-agent-who-went-missing-6-years> (last visited Mar. 12, 2013) (hereinafter "Report").

³ Ferran and Ross, *supra* n. 1.

⁴ Ferran and Ross, *supra* n. 1.

⁵ Ferran and Ross, *supra* n. 1.

⁶ Ferran and Ross, *supra* n. 1; Report, *supra* n. 2.

⁷ Barry Meier, "American Missing in Iran Was Dressed Like Guantánamo Prisoner in Photographs Sent to Family," N.Y. Times, Jan. 8, 2013, *available at* <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/08/american-missing-in-iran-was-dressed-like-guantanamo-prisoner-in-photographs-sent-to-family> (last visited Mar. 12, 2013). The signs made statements such as "Why you can not help me?" and "This is the result of 30 years serving for USA" and "I am here in Guantanamo do you know where it is?" *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Sixth Anniversary of the Disappearance of Robert Levinson, Press Statement, John Kerry, Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State (Mar. 8, 2013), *available at* <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/03/205889.htm> (last visited Mar. 18, 2013) (hereinafter "State Department Statement").

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ See Philip J. Crowley, Case of Missing U.S. Citizen Robert Levinson, Press Statement, U.S. Department of State (Mar. 9, 2010) *available at* <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/03/137985.htm> (last visited Mar. 18, 2013); Hillary Rodham Clinton, Robert Levinson's 1,000th Day Missing, U.S. Department of State (Dec. 3, 2009) *available at* <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/12/133085.htm> (last visited Mar. 18, 2013).

¹² Ferran and Ross, *supra* n. 1.

¹³ State Department Statement, *supra* n. 9.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The memorial petitions Congress and the President of the United States to act on their moral obligations to utilize all of the resources at their disposal to bring Robert Levinson home to the United States and his family.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Not applicable.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable.

2. Other:

Not applicable.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

On March 27, 2013, the Local and Federal Affairs Committee adopted one amendment. That amendment made a change to the geographic reference of Robert Levinson's kidnapping, as well as including the U.S. President in the memorial's petition. This analysis has been updated to reflect that amendment.