



Jesse Arreguín

Councilmember, District 4

Max Anderson

Councilmember, District 3

CONSENT CALENDAR

September 29, 2009

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Jesse Arreguín and Max Anderson
Subject: Support For The People Of Iran In The Wake Of The National Election Of June 13, 2009

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution expressing support for the people of Iran in the wake of the national election of June 13, 2009.

BACKGROUND:

On June 13, 2009, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected to a second term amid controversy over widespread reports of Election Day irregularities.

The irregularities included:

- The Iranian government reporting that Ahmadinejad received 63% of the popular vote, despite public polls indicating a 54% to 39% lead for his challenger, Hossein Mousavi
- Election reports showing near uniform results from virtually all regions of Iran, in stark contrast to the widely varying demographics that all previous Iranian elections have displayed
- Suspicious government claims that forty-million hand-written ballots were counted in the span of twelve hours
- Voting booths closing early due to a reported shortage of ballots
- Iran's cell phone and SMS (text messaging) networks going down on Election Day
- Barring of independent monitors such as the United Nations from observing the process
- Less-than-transparent forces such as the security services and the Revolutionary Guard administering the election process, while the Interior Ministry counted the forty million votes cast

Support For The People Of Iran In The Wake Of The National Election Of June 13, 2009

- Censoring of both foreign and domestic media

Ahmadinejad's election led to hundreds of thousands of protestors in Iran demanding a free and transparent election. However, the Iranian government has cracked down on these protests, resulting in the deaths of at least seven protestors, the arrest of hundreds of opposition leaders, and continued disruption of Internet, cell phone and SMS services.

There are an estimated 400,000 Iranian-Americans living in California, and nearly double that number in the entire United States.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE.

CONTACT PERSON:

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Attachments:

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE OF IRAN WHO ACT IN GOOD FAITH TO SECURE THEIR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS TO TRANSPARENT SELF GOVERNANCE

WHEREAS, June 13, 2009, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected to his second term, with the government reporting that he received 63% of the popular vote, despite the most recent public poll indicating a 54% to 39% lead for his challenger, Hossein Mousavi; and,

WHEREAS, There has been widespread reports of election day irregularities including voting booths closing early due to a reported shortage of ballots and the country's cell phone and SMS (text messaging) networks going down on election day; and,

WHEREAS, The reporting of the election day results was highly suspicious with the government claiming that forty-million hand-written ballots were counted in the span of twelve hours, and,

WHEREAS, The election results showed near uniform results from virtually all regions of Iran, in stark contrast to the widely varying demographics that all previous Iranian elections have displayed; and,

WHEREAS, The Islamic Republic of Iran is not a democracy, it's a theocracy, and there should be no surprise that election irregularities have taken place since no independent monitors such as the United Nations were allowed to observe the process; and,

WHEREAS, We may never know the true outcome of the presidential election since the current regime under President Ahmadinejad and the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei have used less-than-transparent forces such as the security services and the Revolutionary Guard to help administer the election process, while the Interior Ministry counts the forty million votes cast; and,

WHEREAS, Despite great adversity toward those that demonstrate their freedom of speech, millions of Iranians have exercised great feats of courage and creativity toward motivating a new reform movement not seen since the 1978-1979 revolution that toppled the Pahlavi dynasty; and,

WHEREAS, There is electricity in the air in Iran with hundreds of thousands of protestors in the streets demanding a clean and fair election, and reforms such as women's rights and freedom of expression; and,

WHEREAS, The Iranian government has cracked down on these protests, leading to the deaths of at least seven protestors, the arrest of hundreds of opposition leaders, continued disruptions of Internet, cell phone and SMS service, and the censoring of both foreign and domestic media; and,

WHEREAS, There are signs that the massive and sustained protests are having an effect on the Iranian government, including Supreme Leader Khamenei to reconsider his initial endorsement of the election results and directing the Guardian Council to conduct an inquiry into the alleged voting irregularities; and,

WHEREAS, There are an estimated 400,000 Iranian-Americans living in California, and nearly double that number in the entire United States; many of these eligible expatriates voted or tried to vote by absentee ballot in the recent Iranian presidential election; and,

WHEREAS, Similarly to the “citizen diplomacy” strategies deployed between nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War of the 1970s and 1980s, fertile opportunity exists between the peoples of the United States and Iran to foster a new grassroots diplomacy aimed at pursuing peace between both nations and democratic reforms in Iran.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Berkeley City Council in the County of Alameda urges the Iranian government to respect its people’s right to peaceful protest; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Berkeley City Council stands in solidarity with the nonviolent creative protests that seek corrective action to voting irregularities in Iran, and respectfully calls upon the Guardian Council and Ayatollah Khamenei to implement electoral procedures that validate an accountable election process; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Berkeley City Council expresses its support for the people of Iran who act in good faith to secure their democratic rights to transparent self-governance in the wake of the national election of June 13, 2009.