



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: Sanctions on Burma
Da: Thursday, June 24, 2004

Today the U.S. Senate passed a joint resolution (H.J. Res. 97) renewing the trade sanctions on Burma for another year. Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, which has jurisdiction over international trade matters, offered the following comments on the Senate's action:

“The Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act was our response to the reprehensible attack on the National League for Democracy which occurred on May 30, 2003, and the arrest of many NLD officials, including their leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

“As Senator Baucus and I noted last year after the Senate passed this legislation, the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act contains a guarantee of ongoing congressional oversight. We felt it was important that the Congress revisit the issue of trade sanctions on Burma each year. That way, Congress can consider whether, in light of any changed circumstances, it is appropriate to renew the ban on Burmese imports for another year.

“Unfortunately, we're one year down the road and it seems to me not much of substance has changed in Burma. So, I support the renewal of trade sanctions for another year. I hope today's Senate action sends a strong signal to the leaders of Burma that the status quo is simply not acceptable. And I hope that come next year, circumstances in Burma will have changed to the point where sanctions will no longer be necessary.”

H.J. Res. 97 was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on June 14, 2004. An identical joint resolution, “Approving the Renewal of Import Restrictions Contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003” (S.J. Res. 39), was introduced in the Senate on June 7, 2004, and referred to the Finance Committee. The Committee favorably reported S.J. Res. 39 by a unanimous vote without amendment in open executive session on June 15, 2004. Chairman Grassley filed the Committee's Report (No. 108-281) on June 18, 2004. Today's action clears the joint resolution for the President's consideration.