

## House approves tougher sanctions on Iran

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Asserting the need to force Iran's hand on its nuclear weapons program and its support of international terrorism, the House on Friday moved to reinforce sanctions against the Tehran government.

The House legislation, approved on a voice vote, would also authorize state and local governments to divest the assets of their pension funds and investments in companies that have invested more than \$20 million in Iran's oil industry.

The measure takes aspects of several measures passed overwhelmingly in the House last year but which did not advance in the Senate and met opposition from the administration. The chances of the Senate taking up the issue in the last few hours of this session are uncertain.

**House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Howard Berman, D-Calif., said more meaningful sanctions were needed if Iran would not change its behavior as a result of incentives offered by the West. Past sanctions, he said, "have squeezed Iran's economy somewhat but clearly not enough to slow down its nuclear program."**

The top Republican on the committee, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida, said she supported the bill but said it didn't go far enough. "This weak legislation will send a message to our enemies of a weakened U.S. position on the issue of Iran."

Another problem, she said, was that the bill gave the president authority to waive sanctions for national security reasons.

The vote comes on the same day the U.N. Security Council, in a compromise worked out by the United States and Russia, issued a resolution condemning Iran's nuclear program but not adding to past sanctions imposed on Iran for refusing to halt its uranium enrichment program. The U.S., Britain and France had sought tougher sanctions but were opposed by Russia and China.

The House bill would also:

- Codify and expand export and import bans on U.S.-Iran trade.
- Freeze assets in the U.S. held by those close to the Iranian government.
- Make a U.S. company liable for sanctions violations if it uses a foreign subsidiary to get around the sanctions.
- Give the Treasury Department greater authority to fight terrorist financing.
- Increase export controls on countries involved in transshipment of sensitive technologies to Iran.

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The bill is H.R. 7112.