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House Condemns Iran's Suppression of Protests

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While President Obama has been measured in his comments about the Iranian election, the House weighed in on Friday in support of the rights of protestors to challenge the election results and overwhelmingly adopted a resolution condemning the Iranian government for violence against the demonstrators.

The resolution, proposed jointly by the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Howard L. Berman, Democrat of California, and the Republican conference chairman, Representative Mike Pence of Indiana, was approved by 405 to 1, with a single Republican opposed and two Democrats voting "present."

Mr. Berman, in remarks on the House floor, stressed that members of Congress were not taking sides in the Iranian election nor seeking to prolong the unrest in pursuit of American foreign policy goals.

"This resolution is not about American interests," Mr. Berman said. "It's about American values, which I believe are universal values: the values of the rule of law; of participatory democracy; about individual liberty and about justice. And it is on behalf of those universal values not American interests that I urge this body to support this resolution."

Representative Bob Inglis, Republican of South Carolina, said the attempted suppression of public protest by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was wrong.

"I saw this morning that the supreme leader of Iran said that street challenge is not acceptable," Mr. Inglis said. "We beg to differ and the people of Iran are begging to differ. When you can count paper ballots, millions of them in a couple of hours, something is funny. And when you say the result of the election is fine but there are going to be some investigations, what is the value of the investigations?"

Mr. Inglis said there could be no confidence in the election results. "Rigged elections don't produce outcomes that people can believe in," he said, adding: "We the people of the United States should stand boldly with the people in Tehran and elsewhere in Iran who are saying, 'We yearn to breath free,' who want to govern themselves. This is their moment. We stand in support of them."

At the White House on Thursday, the press secretary, Robert Gibbs, deflected questions about whether Mr. Obama had been too restrained in his response to the disputed

election results and the unrest in Iran. But he also made clear that the White House expected members of Congress to weigh in with their own opinions.

“The president and his team are responsible for what the president and his team say,” Mr. Gibbs said. “I’m not going to get into what motivates other people to do or say what they do or say. But I think the president believes that he has struck the right tone.”

The resolution stated:

“The House of Representatives expresses its support for all Iranian citizens who embrace the values of freedom, human rights, civil liberties, and the rule of law; condemns the ongoing violence against demonstrators by the government of Iran and pro-government militias, as well as the ongoing government suppression of independent electronic communication through interference with the Internet and cell phones; and affirms the universality of individual rights and the importance of democratic and fair elections.”