

# **H. Res. 1451**

## ***In the House of Representatives, U. S.,***

*September 24, 2008.*

*Resolved,*

### **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This resolution may be cited as the “Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Establishment Resolution”.

### **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.**

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the House of Representatives the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (hereafter in this resolution referred to as the “Commission”), which shall promote and advocate in a non-partisan manner, both within and outside of Congress, internationally recognized human rights norms as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments by carrying out the following activities:

- (1) Developing congressional strategies to promote, defend, and advocate internationally recognized human

rights norms reflecting the role and responsibilities of the Congress.

(2) Raising greater awareness among Members of the House of Representatives, their staffs, and the public regarding international human rights violations and developments.

(3) Providing Members and staff with expert human rights advice and information and by supporting entities of Congress in their work on human rights issues.

(4) Advocating on behalf of individuals and entities whose internationally recognized human rights have been violated or are in danger of being violated.

(5) Collaborating closely with other professional staff members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

(6) Collaborating closely with the President, other officials of the executive branch, and recognized national and international human rights entities and nongovernmental organizations in promoting human rights initiatives within Congress.

(7) Encouraging and supporting Members, especially Members who have been recently elected to the House, to become active in supporting human rights issues so that the United States will continue to be rec-

ognized throughout the world as a leader in the defense of internationally recognized human rights norms.

(b) **ELIGIBILITY.**—Any Member of the House of Representatives may join the Commission by submitting a written statement to that effect to the co-chairs of the Commission.

(c) **RELATIONSHIP WITH SENATE.**—In carrying out its activities, the Commission is encouraged to establish a cooperative working relationship with Members and other entities of the Senate, and to invite Members and other entities of the Senate to work cooperatively with the Commission to promote human rights.

(d) **DEFINITION.**—In this resolution, the term “Member of the House of Representatives” includes a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress.

**SEC. 3. CO-CHAIRS OF THE COMMISSION.**

(a) **APPOINTMENT.**—Two members of the Commission shall be appointed to serve as co-chairs of the Commission as follows:

(1) One member shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

(2) One member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives after consultation with the ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

(b) **TERM OF SERVICE.**—A member’s term as co-chair of the Commission shall continue throughout the Congress during which the member is appointed as a co-chair under this section until the member leaves the Commission, resigns from the position of co-chair, or is removed pursuant to subsection (c).

(c) **REMOVAL.**—The co-chair appointed pursuant to subsection (a)(1) may be removed by the Speaker after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the co-chair appointed pursuant to subsection (a)(2) may be removed by the minority leader after consultation with the ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

(d) **VACANCY.**—A vacancy in the position of any of the co-chairs of the Commission shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

(e) **DUTIES.**—The co-chairs shall be responsible for setting the general agenda of the Commission.

#### **SEC. 4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Commission shall have an Executive Committee which shall consist of 8 members of the Commission equally divided between members of the majority and minority parties selected jointly by the co-chairs of the Commission with the approval of the Speaker of the House

of Representatives and the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(b) VACANCY.—A vacancy in the membership of the Executive Committee shall be filled in the same manner in which the original selection was made.

**SEC. 5. ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.**

(a) USE OF COMMITTEE STAFF AND RESOURCES.—Subject to subsection (b), the Commission shall carry out its duties using the staff and resources of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, including the use of consultants or temporary employees, such as individuals with expertise in human rights issues, related legislative matters, and technology systems management, as appropriate.

(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF.—

(1) APPOINTMENT.—The staff of the Committee on Foreign Affairs who may be used by the Commission under subsection (a) to carry out its duties shall be professional staff members of the Committee who are appointed for this purpose by the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, of whom half of the full-time equivalent positions shall be appointed from among a list of individuals presented to the Chairman of the Committee by the co-chair appointed pursuant to section 3(a)(1) and half of the full-time equivalent positions shall be appointed from among a list of individuals pre-

sent to the Chairman of the Committee by the co-chair appointed pursuant to section 3(a)(2).

(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR DETERMINATION OF NUMBER OF COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS.—Any professional staff member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs who is used by the Commission to carry out its duties on a full-time basis shall not be included in determining the number of professional staff members of the Committee under subparagraphs (1) and (2) of clause 9(a) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

**SEC. 6. OTHER POWERS AND DUTIES.**

(a) BYLAWS.—The Commission shall adopt and publish such bylaws to govern its organization and operation (including the duties of the Executive Committee) as it considers appropriate, subject to the applicable Rules of the House of Representatives.

(b) NO LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY.—The Commission shall not have legislative jurisdiction and shall have no authority to take legislative action on any bill or resolution.

**SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

In addition to any other amounts made available for salaries and expenses of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives during a Congress, there are authorized to be appropriated from the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives such sums as may be necessary

for the Committee to provide staff and resources for the Commission pursuant to section 5.

**SEC. 8. TRANSITION FOR CURRENT MEMBERS OF CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS.**

For purposes of this resolution—

(1) each Member of the House of Representatives who is a member of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus as of the date of the adoption of this resolution shall be deemed to have joined the Commission; and

(2) the 2 Members of the House of Representatives who are the co-chairs of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus as of the date of the adoption of this resolution shall be deemed to have been appointed as co-chairs of the Commission.

Attest:

*Clerk.*