

September 19, 2006 - House Passes Sanchez Legislation to Pressure Vietnam on Confiscated Property

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House Unanimously Passes Sanchez Legislation to Pressure Vietnam to Return Confiscated Property

WASHINGTON—Today, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed H.Res. 415, a bill sponsored by Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), calling on the government of Vietnam to do more to resolve claims for confiscated real and personal property as well as end any further illegal confiscations.

H.Res. 415, a bipartisan bill, was introduced in response to requests from many of her constituents that had unresolved claims for real and personal property confiscated shortly after the Fall of Saigon. Hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese refugees fled Vietnam to countries around the world, leaving behind homes and property.

The United States is currently considering Permanent Normal Trade Relations with the government of Vietnam and the resolution of these claims would be a solid first step in illustrating the country's good faith to address human rights issues.

Sanchez represents one of the largest Vietnamese communities outside of Vietnam, is the co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Vietnam and longtime advocate for human rights in Vietnam.

Today, she made the following statement on the House Floor:

"I introduced House Resolution 415 in July of 2005, out of growing concern for the Government of Vietnam's continued illegal seizures of personal property from Vietnamese citizens and private organizations.

Even though Article 23 of the Vietnamese Constitution prohibits seizure of property without compensation, this has not been enforced. We must support the people of Vietnam who continue to fight for the right to keep their land, or at the very least, make sure that they are compensated for land that has been unfairly taken from them.

The Government of Vietnam claims that it is working to improve its human rights record. Congress can send a clear message today to the Government of Vietnam that its progress on human rights will be evaluated by the steps it takes to end property seizures, and to fairly compensate the citizens and organizations whose land has been unfairly taken.

Congress must be clear with the Government of Vietnam that promises alone are NOT satisfactory, that implementation and enforcement are real measures of progress. I urge my colleagues to support the people of Vietnam, and send a clear message to the Government of Vietnam, by voting for this resolution today."

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