

# September 18, 2007: Sanchez Supports Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007

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## SANCHEZ SUPPORTS VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS ACT OF 2007

House of Representatives Overwhelmingly Passes H.R. 3096

Washington, D.C. - Today, Representative Loretta Sanchez joined the U.S. House of Representatives in supporting H.R. 3096, the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007 that passed with a House vote of 414 to 3.

Yesterday, Sanchez delivered the following statement in strong support of the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007 where she discussed Vietnam's continued oppressive record on human rights and the critical need for the Government of Vietnam to demonstrate significant progress.

Below are remarks as delivered.

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### Loretta Sanchez Statement on HR 3096

September 17, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleague for yielding me to speak about the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007.

As you know, I represent the largest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam in the world. And so, I have had a chance to visit Vietnam three times; actually I just finished visiting in April of this year. Before that I had been denied a visa to visit Vietnam for three times in the past 2 1/2 years.

Now I rise today in support of my colleague's House Resolution 3096 because this is a very critical time in our relationship with Vietnam.

Before being accepted in the World Trade Organization (WTO) in January, the Government of Vietnam assured the world that they would make significant progress in the area of human rights. Things that we as Americans really sometimes take for granted: freedom of speech; freedom of the press; freedom of collective bargaining; freedom to assemble as we

wish; and most importantly, really one of the reasons our country was founded, freedom of religion.

As my colleague from New Jersey stated, we had put Vietnam on the list of particular concern with respect to the infringement on religious beliefs of the people of Vietnam.

And even they were taken off in anticipation of this issue of going into the WTO. Many promises in the 11 years that I have served in the Congress, many, many promises by the communist Government of Vietnam, yet nothing ever holds up.

And in this particular case, every person who has stood up to speak inside of Vietnam for

democracy, for democracy, for something other than the communist party- for free elections; for return of land confiscated by that government; for ability to practice the

religion that they want; for their ability to assemble three or four or five on a street corner with a simple sign asking, wanting, searching for democracy.

And each and every one of these people are under house arrest, have been put in prison. One of them, Father Ly, for example, was given a trial, a trial that lasted one day. No attorney available to him.

In a very famous photograph sent across the world of the communist government with their hand over his mouth at his very own trial because they didn't want him to be heard by the world.

The Venerable Thich Quang Do, a Buddhist, through peaceful means saying we need religious freedom, recognized the church where most of the Buddhists in Vietnam want to belong, but nothing instead he is under house arrest.

All of these dissidents, and yet they continue to speak up and try to tell the world that there is no human rights in Vietnam. And they continue to fight. And many of my colleagues on the other side and on our side of the aisle have been working to get this message out.

So then they got WTO and they imprisoned everybody. I was there in April.

There were no dissidents to meet; I asked to go the prisons. I asked to go see those who had put behind bars--they laughed they would not let me. They said, how dare you ask. You know better then to ask to ask to see those people.

And our Ambassador at his residence there put together a tea of the wives and the mothers of the dissidents, not people who had spoken up, simply because they were married and these women were worried about their husbands. And they

came to talk to us. They were stopped at their homes. They were barricaded in their homes. The streets were barricaded to their homes so they couldn't get out.

And the two who made it, now in a very famous video playing on the internet -- as I came to the home, so did those women, the two who got through. And about 25 communist government soldiers descended upon us, pulling us apart, and dragging away one of the women. The Ambassador came out. He said these women are simply here to come and have tea with us. But they would have none of it.

This is democracy? These are the human rights that this government promised? So I say today, let us not be conspirators with this government in the backslide of progress.

Please, I ask my colleagues; join us in voting for this resolution today. And I yield back my time. Thank you.

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Remarks may also be viewed on:

[http://recap.fednet.net/archive/Buildasx.asp?sProxy=80\\_hflr091707\\_032.wmv,80\\_hflr091707\\_033.wmv&sTime=00:02:57.3&eTime=00:03:39&duration=00:05:39.0&UserName=paula&sLocation=L&sExpire=0](http://recap.fednet.net/archive/Buildasx.asp?sProxy=80_hflr091707_032.wmv,80_hflr091707_033.wmv&sTime=00:02:57.3&eTime=00:03:39&duration=00:05:39.0&UserName=paula&sLocation=L&sExpire=0).