

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Chairman House Foreign Affairs Committee
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gregory Meeks
Ranking Member House Foreign Affairs
Committee
2471 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

October 4, 2024

Dear Chairman McCaul and Ranking Member Meeks,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to strongly urge you to advance the Internet Reach and Access Now (IRAN) Act ([H.R.9299](#)) through a markup at the House Foreign Affairs Committee. This bipartisan piece of legislation, introduced by Representatives Eric Swalwell (D-CA) and Claudia Tenney (R-NY), has already attracted a diverse array of [cosponsors](#) and represents a crucial effort to uphold internet freedom in Iran.

In Iran, the internet serves as a vital tool for communication and a platform for exposing human rights abuses. Unfortunately, the Islamic Republic of Iran regularly imposes censorship and enforces internet shutdowns, severely limiting the free flow of information. Additionally, the regime has increasingly weaponized the internet as a means of surveillance, particularly targeting activists and civil society groups since the rise of the Woman, Life, Freedom movement. According to the [Freedom House Index](#), Iran is currently one of the worst performers in terms of internet freedom globally.

The IRAN Act seeks to enhance open internet access and combat the repression and surveillance enforced by the Iranian regime. This legislation makes it a legal requirement for the U.S. government to actively advocate for open internet access for the Iranian populace. Key components of the legislation include:

1. **Comprehensive Strategy:** The Secretary of State will be responsible for establishing and maintaining a strategy to support internet freedom, coordinating efforts across federal agencies.
2. **Guidance for Technology Companies:** Develop guidance for the Department of Treasury to ensure that U.S. sanctions do not hinder Iranians' access to technology.
3. **VPN/Satellite Accessibility:** The development of strategies to enhance access to VPNs and direct-to-cell satellite technologies and develop strategies for increasing the accessibility of such networks and technologies.
4. **Internet Blackouts:** Assess the ability of the Iranian regime to cut off all access to the internet and develop a strategy to circumvent internet blackouts for Iranian civil society.

Endorsing and advancing the IRAN Act is a significant step towards supporting the Iranian people in their quest for a democratic and stable Iran. Open internet access is crucial for political organizing, the free exchange of information, and connecting Iranians with the broader global community.

Thank you for considering this vital issue. We hope you will stand with the Iranian people in their struggle for human rights and democracy.

Sincerely,



Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans



Center for Human Rights in Iran



Freedom House



Iranian American Democrats of California



Lantern, one of the two largest VPN service providers to Iranian civil society



National Union for Democracy in Iran



Psiphon, the largest provider of anti-censorship services in Iran

cc: Representative Joe Wilson
Representative Dean Phillips
Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee