**Meehan Introduces "Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act"**

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Press Release

***Meehan: No Sanctions Relief Until Iran Pays Victims What They Are Owed***

Congressman Patrick Meehan (PA-07) has introduced legislation prohibiting sanctions relief for Iran unless it first pays the court-ordered damages it owes to terror victims.

The Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act, H.R. 3457, prohibits the President from waiving sanctions or “refrain[ing] from applying” sanctions pursuant to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action until Iran pays the judgments it owes. The President must certify to Congress that the Government of Iran has paid all its judgments.

“Iran should not get a red cent in U.S. sanctions relief until it has paid its victims what they are owed,” said Meehan. “I oppose the Iran deal, but surely we can all agree that Iran should not reap any benefits from the U.S. until it has compensated the families of those whose lives were taken by Iranian terrorism.”

The Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act (FSIA) as amended gives U.S. victims of state-sponsored terrorism the ability to bring suit in U.S. courts and collect damages from those states.

Iran has accumulated a debt of $43.5 billion in unpaid damages through more than 80 FSIA cases over the last 15 years, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Among the victims of Iranian terrorism who have been awarded judgments in U.S. courts are victims of the 9/11 attacks, the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, the 1983 attack on the Beirut Marine barracks, and numerous other bus bombings, suicide attacks, assassinations and hostage takings. All these attacks were linked in court to Iranian support or financing.

One suit involved a western Pennsylvania native named Lawrence Belkin, who lost his wife Gail in a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, Israel. On March 4, 1996, according to court documents

"Belkin, her mother, and one of her daughters went shopping for a wedding dress in the Dizengoff Center Shopping Mall in Tel Aviv, Israel, as her daughter was engaged to be married. After a time, the daughter remained in the mall shopping by herself while Gail Belkin and her mother went outside. At approximately 4:00 p.m. on March 4, 1996, a suicide bomber affiliated with the Shaqaqi faction of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (“PIJ”) detonated a 40-pound bomb that he was carrying just outside the doors of the shopping mall in the vicinity of Gail Belkin and her mother. Gail Belkin and her mother, plus eleven others, mostly women and children, were killed in the blast."

Iran is a well-known funder and supporter of the PIJ. According to the State Department’s 1996 “Patterns of Global Terrorism” report, “Iran continued to provide support – including money, weapons and training – to a variety of terrorist groups, such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Palestine Islamic Jihad (‘PIJ’).”

U.S. courts have directed Iran to pay damages to the Belkins in excess of $18 million.

“The principle and effect of this bill is simple: no sanctions relief unless Iran pays up,” Meehan said